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## Ethnographic monitoring as method toward a pedagogy of narrative

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# Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies

## Paper 70

### **Ethnographic monitoring as method toward a pedagogy of narrative**

by

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Ethnographic monitoring as method  
toward a pedagogy of narrative

Kristel Peters

2013

*It is only in the narrative mode that one can  
construct an identity and find a place in one's  
culture. Schools must cultivate it, nurture it,  
cease taking it for granted.  
(Bruner 1996: 42)*

**Master Thesis  
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Second reader: Prof. Dr. Jan Blommaert**

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

### *Investigating narrative and voice in the transition class*

This thesis engages with ethnographically investigated issues of narrative and voice in a transition class in the Southeastern part of the Netherlands. A transition class is a class in a regular primary school where children who are less proficient in Dutch than is expected based on their age, are given intensive language teaching for one year. Theoretically, Dutch children with a language deficit can be placed in a transition class, but in the class the data were collected in this had not happened so far. Children can enter the class at any moment in the school year and they leave after maximally ten months of education, regardless of their proceedings. The research was carried out on Mayflower Primary School<sup>1</sup>, a school with three transition classes. Miss Potter was the teacher of the transition class wherein the fieldwork took place. She was 26 years old at the time of the fieldwork. The class consisted of ten to twelve children whose ages ranged from 9 to 12. All of them were immigrant children who had arrived relatively recently in the Netherlands. As we will see, this group of children was extremely diverse and heterogeneous.

In studies of non-traditional classrooms, positive appraisals of the affective qualities of teachers have been rare. It might even be the case that “a lot of educational research has simply ignored its positive qualities” (Van der Aa 2012: 33). During the fieldwork I was at first surprised by the enormous efforts of the teacher to overcome inequality and to assist the children in their accomplishment of voice. This positive part of the picture is similar to Poveda’s (2002) finding that the approximation of the children’s experiences in classrooms with minority-group students and majority-group teachers stems from the practical resources, effort and willingness of the teacher and fellow pupils. I found that in the transition class, the teacher’s commitment and her willingness to be relatively flexible and pedagogically lenient when it came to the norm the pupils had to adhere to was crucial for the children’s opportunities to fulfill communicative functions with the resources in their repertoires.

My aim in this thesis is twofold. First, I want to shed light on the workings of narrative and voice in the transition class. Second, I demonstrate each of the four steps of ethnographic monitoring. For each step I explain what it consists of and focus on the results and knowledge that can be generated in that particular step. In Chapters 2-5 the focus is on the data, and these data are interwoven with theoretical views. This ‘web’ reflects the construction of an archive of knowledge. In doing so, I hope to show the potential of ethnographic monitoring for studying narrative and voice as well as for the creation of democratic knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms are used to guarantee the pupils’ anonymity. Agreements were made with the school not to mention the name of the city, the name of the school, the name of the teacher and the names of the pupils.

The theoretical framework is built around the notions of inequality, narrative, voice, and genre. The choice for ethnographic monitoring as method follows from the interest in these topics. In this theoretical and methodological framework narrative, voice and related issues constitute a perspective that is guiding in all stages of the research process.

## **§1.1. Theoretical framework**

### ***§1.1.1. Narrative as mode***

The human capacity to narrate and the stories we tell, have been an area of interest in a variety of scientific branches. In linguistic anthropology and in some branches of sociolinguistics, storytelling is believed to be fundamental in human communication. The idea is that “narrative is a mode of thought, communication and apprehension of reality which is both super-arching and fundamental to human cognitive makeup” (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 15). The narrative mode is present in all communities: narrative seems to rest upon an ability that is part of human nature, since storytelling happens everywhere on the world (Hymes 1992). Hymes (Id.) has argued that the narrative mode allows for conveying knowledge of the particular, the chaotic, and consequently, of human experience. As such, storytelling is regarded as being capable of offering a unique view on human experience. The narrative mode enables us to combine cognitive, emotional, affective, cultural, social and aesthetic aspects (Blommaert 2009).

When we tell a story of personal experience, we account for a “verbalized, visualized and/or embodied framing of a sequence of possible life events” (Ochs & Capps 1996: 19). Producing a narrative imposes order on otherwise disconnected life events: narrative does not *reflect* coherence and continuity, but rather *constructs* it (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012). Personal stories connect the self in the past, present and future by transforming past, present and possible future experiences into a sequence of events (Ochs and Capps 1996). Not only does narrative create this sequence, stories also function to determine our position as individual within this sequence. In doing so, narrative appeals to our position in (social) space. Producing a narrative enables us to build novel understandings of “ourselves-in-the-world” (Ochs & Capps 1996:22) by means of explicitly connecting the self and society.

Personal narratives connect one event to another from a particular personal perspective. It is the inclusion of a personal point of view which helps us to locate events against a larger horizon of experience, and which, as a result, makes narratives meaningful. It is exactly in this line of argument that narrative can be regarded as “basic to human understanding of the world” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012: 17).



### ***§1.1.2. Voice and inequality***

The leniency toward the inclusion of a personal point of view in a narrative pertains to issues of voice. Voice is the capacity to make oneself understood, and being granted to do so in one's own terms (Blommaert 2008b). Voice is neither similar to language; nor does it refer to vocal characteristics. The accomplishment of voice or a lack thereof, is the outcome of a communication process. Voice is accomplished when someone has been able to say something in his/her own particular way and when s/he is understood accordingly, resulting in satisfaction on behalf of the speaker: voice is "to express things on one's own terms, to communicate in ways that satisfy personal, social, and cultural needs – to be communicatively competent, so to speak" (Blommaert 2008b: 17). Voice is dynamic rather than a static given, meaning that first, voice is always bound to a context and, second, that people do not have one voice that is either heard or misheard. A child's voice can be at the same time a problem at school, - when for instance the narrative style of a child is misrecognized and the child's voice is consequently silenced - ; and be fully accomplished at home - where the child may be capable of telling elaborate stories (see Hornberger 2006).

Blommaert (2010) has noted that certain voices "*systematically* prevail over others, because the impact of certain centers of authority is bigger than that of other" (p. 41, original emphasis). This is where voice touches on systematic, institutional inequality and it is in this context that the urgency of voice becomes visible. An analysis of voice here becomes an analysis of inequality and social hierarchy. Education is an institutional setting wherein inequality and social hierarchy prevail. Education is potentially empowering and creating opportunities, but it does so by prescribing a particular order. This results in a problematic achievement of voice in education.

When it comes to the accomplishment of voice ratification is crucial since one is only able to produce voice when it is ratified as such (Blommaert and Backus 2011: 23). As a result voice consists of two parts: the speaker's ability to accomplish voice and the audience's capacity and/or willingness to hear the speaker on his/her terms. In table 1 the way hearer (audience) and speaker are related to each other in the accomplishment of voice are schematically presented.

Table 1: Voice and the communicational process

ACHIEVEMENT OF VOICE		SPEAKER	
		Speaks on his/her own terms	Doesn't speak on his/her own terms
RECIPIENT	Hears speaker on his/her own terms	+	+/-
	Doesn't hear speaker on his/her own terms	-	-

*+ =voice is not produced; - = voice is produced*

As we can see, refusal for whatever reason on behalf of the hearer (recipient) always results in a situation wherein voice cannot be accomplished. When the speaker is allowed to speak on his/her own terms and he/she is heard on these terms, voice is always produced and the speaker is regarded as communicatively competent (Blommaert 2008b). When someone is heard at one's own terms but not capable or allowed to speak on these terms, an ambiguous picture comes about. In this situation people's ways to communicate competently are allowed to be deviant from the dominant ways to produce meaning, both in terms of content and style. When people are allowed to produce meaning in a way of speaking that is deviant from the norm but nevertheless awarded to be suitable to achieve the communicative goal, voice *can* still (partly) be accomplished even when this way of speaking is not automatically theirs. When voice is accomplished, the way of speaking is recognized as being capable to making sense, even when it is deviant. Note that this is a precarious process that can also very easily result in a lack of accomplishment of voice. It is this situation, often characterized by ambiguity, which was found in the transition class: the dominant way of expression was Dutch, but the pupils were allowed to express themselves in non-standard Dutch or by making use of other resources. Since in this situation the outcome of the communicative process cannot be predetermined, situated ethnographic research is relevant especially in these situations. Eventually, the accomplishment of voice seems to depend on the existence of a setting wherein voice is appreciated by the hearer, hinging on participants and place, but also crucially on issues of power and inequality. It will be clear that in educational settings, the teacher plays a major role in the bringing about of such a setting. As I will show in Chapter 2 and 3, Miss Potter was to some extent aware of the inequality in her transition class. Within this context she sought to encourage the children's narrative performance and support their storytelling. Nevertheless the stories had to be told in a particular genre and the narrating took place in an institutional format, which resulted in Miss Potter not being able or allowed to always support the children's storytelling. Moreover Miss Potter and the teachers of the other transition classes in Mayflower Primary School were faced with the school's rigid language policy when it came to the use of other languages than Dutch in the classroom.

As I show in §2.3, the teachers' solution was to adhere to another center of authority than the school's policy. Miss Potter's goal was to negotiate inequality and to mediate the making of meaning by the pupils in general (see §3.5). Despite her enduring efforts she could not change the state of affairs, which was reinforced by the limitations of the institutional environment. Consequently, Miss Potter could not solve the children's struggle for voice.

Hymes (1996) has defined voice within a broader perspective on language, including a view on power and linguistic inequality. He stresses that two ingredients of a vision on language are longstanding:

One is a kind of negative freedom, freedom from denial or opportunity due to something linguistic, whether in speaking or reading or writing. One is a kind of positive freedom, freedom for satisfaction in the use of language, for language to be a source imaginative life and satisfying form. In my own mind I would unite the two kinds of freedom in the notion of *voice*: freedom to have one's voice heard, freedom to develop a voice worth hearing. (p. 64)

Hymes argues here how voice consists of a twofold freedom: first, to show which voices are lost or silenced and, in doing so, to make visible inequality. We see that, when voice is accomplished, the first kind of freedom turns into the freedom to have one's voice heard, i.e. to be heard on one's own terms (Blommaert 2008b). The second kind of freedom then turns into the freedom to develop a voice worth hearing i.e. to have the authority to declare meaning. The (dis)ability to accomplish voice defines linguistic inequality (Blommaert 2005) and it is this link that determines the urgency of the issue of voice. Hymes (1992) has stated that voice and linguistic inequality are closely related and in doing so, he has sketched the underpinnings of studying voice. These underpinnings reside in languages being potentially equal while the actual state of language is not only one of difference, but one of inequality as well. Moreover the potential equality of languages is taken for granted while the actual inequality of language in, among others, education, is ignored (Hymes 1992; 1996).

To understand Hymes's argument of linguistic inequality, it is important to understand that a particular language is what it is because of what users have made of it. All languages have the same potential, but the generic potentiality of a particular language is realized differently in different communities (Hymes 1992). Consequently, not all languages develop in the same way, resulting in only potential, but not actual, equality. Hymes has distinguished four categories of sources of linguistic inequality. First of all, languages differ in what can be done with them: they „differ in their makeup as adaptive resources“ (Hymes 1996: 57). The potentiality is the same for all languages as all languages are capable of the same „adaptive growth“ (Hymes 1996: 56), but the realization of this potentiality entails costs, often in terms of power and money. According to Hymes „any language has the potential to become a language in which scientific medicine is practiced. Most languages do not now have the vocabulary, discourse patterns, and texts.“ (1992: 7). Since not all languages have realized their potentiality in the same ways, languages are not equally complex and, therefore, not all

languages are suitable for all purposes. Languages differ, among others, in number of lexical items, in number and proportion of abstract terms available and in complexity of both phonological and morphological word-structure (Hymes 1996: 56). Second of all, languages differ as a consequence of the differences between persons and personalities. These differences are found due to variability on genetic grounds and of cultural patterns. Third of all, languages differ as a consequence of the division and type of institutions in a community. Language is what it is due to its history - in this respect there are no difference between pidgin or creole languages and all other varieties of language (Hymes 1992). The influence of policy on the development of a language is for all languages inevitable. Fourth of all, the values and beliefs a community has about languages have an effect. Hymes (1992) states that, when there is a variety of English that differs from the norm, there will be people “who will see it not as different, but as deficient” (p. 4). When it comes to language, people have preferences and at the same time they turn into a complex of attributed ideas as soon as they hear someone speak. Some languages are believed to be more appropriate, and to carry more prestige, than others, although this is not due to implicit characteristics of the language.

Apart from not all languages being equally appropriate and carrying equal prestige, not all languages are equally accessible for all people: access to a language costs time and money, which is not equally divided over the world. Moreover there is always a difference between center and peripheral areas when it comes to power, and, sometimes, also space. Since not all languages are equally useful and equally appropriate in several domains, these differences in accessibility of languages always imply inequality. It is here that the complex of (socio)linguistic and cultural resources someone has at his/her disposal relates directly to issues of power and inequality. These complexes of resources (repertoires) follow one biography in the sense that one acquires the resources that are needed to achieve a particular goal. For the children in the transition class these goals are ‘being allowed to participate in Dutch regular education’. In order to be regarded as communicatively competent in Dutch education the pupils need a certain command of Dutch. Here we see how a repertoire does not only follow one’s biography but that it is also a “complex of traces of power” (Blommaert and Backus 2011: 23). The pupils in Miss Potter’s transition class need Dutch (and not English, Somali, German and so forth) in order to be heard. This is a topic I will elaborate on in Chapter 3.

### ***§1.1.3. Generic structures: sharing time***

In the institutional environment of Miss Potter’s transition class the children’s narratives had to be told in a particular generic structure. Miss Potter’s encouragement to hear the children’s stories was an encouragement to hear a story in a particular way. Two recurring instances of sharing time were observed in the class: *Vertellen* (“Telling”)

and *Woordenschat* ('Vocabulary'). As I show in Chapter 4, during each moment the children had to adhere to another generic norm. Particularly the length of the story and the choice for a topic were restricted. Miss Potter reiterated these restrictions and she policed the children in adhering to these norms, but as we will see, during storytelling, she did not police the pupils in adhering to lexical, grammatical and phonological norms. During the fieldwork I did not find occasions of the pupils policing each other (see Mökkönen 2013).

Let me first turn to a discussion of genre. Speakers always have to contextualize the meanings they want to convey to the audience in a particular way in order to make sure that the utterance is interpretable. For an oral narrative this means that it is always dialogic since the narrative is adjusted to the expectations of the audience and since the audience may interrupt. This implies that the genre a story is told in is (partly) dependent on the way the addressee and his/her expectations are conceived, and that the generic structure is an important part of the composition of the story. As such, genres constitute our communicative behavior and generic structures help us to adjust our behavior according to expectations and norms. Blommaert (2008b) has defined genre as

a cluster of formal communicative/semiotic characteristics that make a particular chunk of communication recognizable in terms of social and cultural categories of communication. The concept refers essentially to a congruence – a non-arbitrary congruence – between form and social context, and it suggests that such congruence means something, that a particular form of communication actually conveys 'genre'-meanings. That is: when we hear or see a particular linguistic form, we immediately tune into a complex of expectations, attitudes and behaviors. (p. 46)

The recognition of a genre by the audience creates certain expectations - e.g. 'a joke is funny' - and demands a particular response, e.g. 'laughing' in the case of a joke. The speaker knows how to tell a joke, that is, how to produce an utterance that fits within the genre 'joke' and the audience knows what to expect and how to react as soon as the genre is recognized as such. The generic form commits the speaker to use language in a specific way that makes the genre recognizable: producing a particular genre implies adhering to the cultural norms that make the utterance recognizable as an instance of that type. In a particular context, only a limited (set of) genre(s) is appropriate. One needs to be able to model his/her utterance in a way that makes sense in that context to be able to produce accepted utterances. Thus, genre are - just like all sorts of linguistic knowledge - subject to linguistic inequality, which eventually results in social and cultural inequality as not all genres are equally accessible to all people.

Narratives can be produced and understood as either a macro-genre or a micro-genre (Ochs and Capps 1996: 19). Regarding the first, several other genres can be mobilized in the line of the story and regarding the second, narrating can be part of another genre, for instance an interview. In primary school, knowing the nuanced differences between different narrative genres is an important skill to children:

“embellished stories, historical accounts, explanations, descriptions, and personal narratives are all forms of narrative discourse that children may experience in the course of one morning’s work” (Hicks 1990: 44) and for all these genres the pupils have to know how to react in an appropriate way. By consequence, children have to learn how to use and how to respond to different genres, as this is required for successful participation in the classroom. Acquiring narrative skills does not only comprise the ordering and recapitulation of a series of events, but, importantly, also doing this in genre-specific ways (Hicks 1990). Just as in other settings, in school the ability to produce particular situation-bound genres is important for successful communication. After all, in school as well as outside school, to produce meaning is to produce meaning in a particular way, i.e. “using very specific linguistic, stylistic and generic resources, thus disqualifying different resources even when they are perfectly valid in view of the particular functions to be realized” (Blommaert 2009: 272). Generic demands can result in the disqualification of types of discourse that are ‘valid in view of the particular functions to be realized’ and here we see how generic demands can imply a limitation of human creativity and of accepted ways to express oneself: although a sociolinguistic resource is valid for the realization of particular functions, normativity can prescribe another generic form, and as a result, ‘other’ resources are seen as ‘invalid resources’. What’s more, children’s narrative development also includes the development of “the ability to adopt a range of perspectives on events, or narrative “voices”, and to interweave these narrative voices for the purpose of a particular telling effect” (Hicks 1990: 69). This particular telling effect is not only an effect on behalf of the audience, but importantly also on behalf of the narrator: to accomplish voice is to be able to produce meaning in a way that satisfies the audience’s, but even more importantly, the teller’s social, personal and cultural needs (Blommaert 2008b).

In primary schools, storytelling is regarded to be important enough to have a moment reserved for it. This moment is usually referred to as sharing time. Michaels (1981) defines sharing time as “a recurring activity where children are called upon to describe an object or give a narrative account about some past event to the entire class” (p. 423). Stories as told during sharing time have to adhere to particular generic norms. During sharing time, teachers usually prescribe the order of the event, and they often announce sharing time with a formulaic question (Id.: 426), for instance the recurrent question in the transition class “What did you do?”. The child’s story is an answer to this question and, as we will see in §4.3, this question has to be answered in an explicitly predetermined format. That sharing time is a genre on its own is also supported by Michaels’s observation that there is such thing as a “sharing intonation”: a “highly marked intonation contour ... [that] ... occurred in *no other* classroom speech activity” (Id.: 426, original emphasis).

Sharing time can fulfill three functions. *First*, as found by Michaels (1981) in her case study, sharing time can serve as an oral preparation for literacy. The relation with literacy learning causes a firm grounding in the educational discourse since “this kind of activity serves to bridge the gap between the child’s home-based oral discourse

competence and the acquisition of literate discourse features required in written communication” (Id.: 423). To be regarded as literate is to master an academic register that entails a “shift from the face-to-face conversational discourse appropriate in the home, to the more discursive strategies of discursive prose” (Id.: 424). Due to the literacy learning preparation sharing time was found to provide, sharing time may be not ‘neutral storytelling’: when the children’s narratives are understood differently, this has an effect on the children’s access to literacy preparation (Id.: 425). Michaels found that sharing time is not free of repercussions: the knowledge, proficiency and skills children display during sharing time are evaluated in “ways that cumulatively affect their placement and access to learning opportunities” (Id.: 425). This way, sharing time may have implications that go beyond storytelling: “some sharing turns generated more successful teacher/child collaboration than others, and hence some children seemed to get more practice using literate discourse strategies than did others” (Id.: 425).

The *second* function of sharing time is the connection between life at home and life at school it enables: during sharing time, pupils are allowed to share an experience from their out-of-school life with their teacher and classmates (Poveda 2002). As a result a bridge is built between their life at home and their life at school. Sharing an experience that took place in another environment entails a shift between these two perspectives. Sharing time thus allows children to become capable of shifting between perspectives in narrative discourse.

The *third* function of sharing time is that it may provide opportunities for children to be understood on their own terms, that is, to produce voice. Sharing time possibly functions as a “locus for gaining attention and appreciation otherwise gone unnoticed” (Van der Aa 2012: 9), implying that during sharing time, the (lack of) children’s ability to achieve voice, becomes visible. A narrative is suitable for the voicing of personal experience for at least two reasons. First, narrative is a crucial way of representing reality to oneself and to others, as discussed in §1.1.1. Second, the relatively long turns in the narrative genre allow for the inclusion of a personal perspective, which results in narrative’s potential to carry voice. Narratives enable pupils to show their own perspective, to express their individual realities and to do this in a way that is perceived as ‘meaningful’. In short: it potentially allows them to accomplish voice.

Miss Potter appeared to be positively aware of the relevance of creating a space for the accomplishment of voice in her transition class. During the fieldwork I focused on instances of narrative as well as on the pupils’ opportunities to produce voice within their stories. In an interview Miss Potter and I discussed the position of narrative in the educational practice in the class. She had clear ideas about this, as I will show more elaborately in Chapter 2. Apart from this, we spoke about the function of narrative and about the focus on the correction of immediately observable linguistic features. It appeared that Miss Potter had nuanced ideas on this, ideas that point in the direction of

an awareness of the importance of storytelling for the pupils. This becomes clear in Example 1. A translated version of this example is to be found in the Appendices.

*Example 1: Miss Potter on narrative and voice, January 2012*

Vooral bij het vertellen vind ik dat ze ook gewoon, hoe zeg je dat, kwijt moeten kunnen wat ze willen en als ik dan teveel op de zinsvorming of grammatica ga inspelen dat ze dan op een gegeven moment zoiets hebben van, ja, dat ze niet meer willen vertellen omdat ze dan het gevoel hebben of bang zijn dat ze het fout doen, zeg maar. Maar ik vind dat ze bij het vertellen dat gewoon moeten kunnen. Net als zo'n Melissa die heel veel fouten maakt in het vertellen, ja, ik vind het wel goed dat ze blijft vertellen en daarom probeer ik haar een soort van onbewust dan, door mijn antwoord wat ik geef, haar dan wel te verbeteren. Maar dan niet zo voor de hele groep, bijvoorbeeld zeggen van "Nee, je moet zeggen dit of...". Bij het vertellen doe ik dat niet, wel als we bijvoorbeeld echt voor een oefening zinnen aan het maken zijn, dan wel, maar niet bij het vertellen.

In this example, Miss Potter referred to the third function of sharing time: sharing time as providing opportunities for the children to achieve voice. Miss Potter illustrated her awareness of the importance of narrative: especially during narrative activities, she wanted to create circumstances wherein the children could speak freely. She clarifies this statement with an example: one of her procedures to protect the pupils from feelings of uncertainty or embarrassment when they are telling a story is that she would only correct their utterances implicitly when it fits within her reply. In doing so, she aimed at creating circumstances that give the pupils a feeling of self-security, in order to avoid the pupils' anxiety to speak. Miss Potter contrasts narrative with exercises that are explicitly targeted at improving the pupils' Dutch language proficiency. During these exercises, she would correct the children if they would make a mistake whereas in the narratives they deployed, she hoped to hear them on their own terms. This brought about a delicate balance in at the one hand correcting pupils in order to teach them Dutch so as to have their voice heard in the Dutch educational system, and on the other hand creating a class environment characterized by safety, wherein the children feel secure enough to produce voice.

In Chapter 2-5 I show how Miss Potter's concerns with voice and her awareness of the inequality in the transition class had led her to the development of pedagogical procedures when it came to storytelling. Procedures she used are: the creation of a particular genre, which she could easily adjust to the pupils' command of Dutch (see §3.5.1); allowing other children to act as interpreter (see §3.5.2); and trying to communicate by means of miming (see §3.5.2). Furthermore, her leniency to the



children's struggle for voice and her awareness of the importance of narrative resulted in a narrative pedagogy wherein narrative functions as learning mode. As I will show in this thesis, the method of ethnographic monitoring allows for making explicit the procedures that are partly unconsciously used as well as for rearticulating the knowledge that is already implicitly present in the field.

## **§1.2. Methodological framework**

For a period of four weeks – in January and February 2012 -, I was present at Mayflower Primary School as participant – I consciously make a choice for the term 'participant' rather than 'participant observer' or 'observer' since I believe that there cannot be observation without participation: observing in a class means affecting the state of affairs in that particular class. During the fieldwork the school was visited three days a week. The collected data consisted of field notes; video and audio recordings of children's narrative performances and other class activities; the weekly evaluations Miss Potter wrote on my request; information about the pupils from their individual files and video recordings of the classroom. I also made photocopies of documents that were used or produced by the people engaged, for instance the school reports, the schedules, and an overview of rules in the classroom. Furthermore, I organized interviews with teachers from the transition classes and the acting principal. These interviews were ethnographic in the sense that they were informal conversations, based on equality. Afterwards, when I had a draft of the first analysis, I evaluated these preliminary results with Miss Potter. The totality of these data served as an archive: an archive of knowledge which eventually resulted in a new kind of perspective that can be shared with stakeholders in the field.

For the final analyses I made use of my field notes for contextual information on the state of affairs, habits and so forth in the class. The information from the pupils' individual files was used for providing a background description of the pupils. From the audio recordings of the pupils and their narrative performances; of the interviews with teachers and acting principal; and of a meeting with the teachers of the transition classes I selected fragments, which I transcribed and analysed. The final analyses took place based on these data and on the insight these gave me in the daily practice of the transition class, resulting in an enduring ethnographic perspective.

Ethnography is an obvious method for investigating narrative, since the view of narrative as default mode of human communication and the epistemology of ethnography are fully compatible: "clearly there is a sense in which narrative can be a source of knowledge.... Narrative does not seem ... in principal entirely reducible to other forms of knowledge, but fundamental in its own right" (Hymes 1996: 12). Narrative thus offers a unique form of knowledge that cannot be acquired through, or reduced to other types of inquiry or knowledge. Narrative is important as a permanent

stage: not only until other methods of presenting research results (for instance tables and graphics) have been found, but as remaining fundamental in its own right. The relation between narrative and ethnography is a fruitful one for at least two more reasons. First, people's narratives or anecdotes are essential in ethnographic research. Without these stories it would be impossible to achieve an understanding of people's previous experiences and, consequently, to construct an insider's perspective. Second, to reconstruct and analyze the narrative in its full meaning, ethnographic knowledge of all aspects of the event is needed. It is this ethnographic experience that enables the researcher to reconstruct the event in its social and historical context and eventually, it is the intention of ethnographic research to provide a historically, politically and personally situated reflection of the ways people tell their stories and lead their lives.

Hymes and his successors have called for democratic knowledge: *from* the people whom we work with and *for* those people. Hymes (1980), Van der Aa and Blommaert (2011) and Van der Aa (2012) discuss a method which is feasible to this goal of democratic knowledge: ethnographic monitoring. Chapters 2-5 are built around the illustration of the 4 steps of ethnographic monitoring, meaning that I will pay extensive attention to the practical side of this method. In the remainder of this section, I will only shortly introduce some of the underpinnings of ethnographic monitoring.

Ethnographic monitoring is a method that aims at creating and providing democratic knowledge, by means of regarding stakeholders – in the case of education these are principal, teachers, but possibly also parents and pupils - not as “merely a source of data, an object at the other side of a scientific instrument” (Hymes 1980: 105), but as cooperators. Due to its cooperative nature, ethnographic monitoring allows for the inclusion of the stakeholders' voice, which suits the principle of democratic knowledge very well: when the voice of teachers, parents and children are taken seriously, educational research may lead to the inclusion of grassroots knowledge and the heard voices can contribute to research on the daily reality the community encounters. Then the research process turns into democratic and cooperative knowledge production that may shed light on questions such as: “how children learn in such an institutional environment, and how some children are excluded from the resources that one needs to have access to in order to be successful” (Van der Aa 2012: 33).

Ethnographic monitoring offers opportunities for the collaborative creation of democratic knowledge and for analyzing voice in educational discourse: “voice as an opportunity for learners and as a target for education, and also as an obstacle and constraint for many individuals and groups” (Van der Aa & Blommaert 2011: 332). When the four steps of ethnographic monitoring are systematically applied, ethnographic monitoring becomes a method to touch upon the potential equality of voice, which is of value to all people involved: to the stakeholders, since the research results are more likely to be useful for them; and to the ethnographer, since the stakeholders may possess exactly the knowledge that is needed. An important

ingredient of ethnography is the knowledge others already have, either consciously or unconsciously, since these people need this knowledge in order to be regarded as 'normal members' of the community (Hymes 1980). With its building upon the belief that knowledge is at least partly with the people that are part of the inquiry, ethnographic monitoring carries its epistemological stance. With Hymes, referring to education: "part of what we need to know ... is not known to anyone; teachers are closer to part of it than most linguists" (1980: 139). It would be a pity to ignore this knowledge.

### **§1.3. Outline**

In the remainder of this thesis I spend each chapter on one of the four steps of ethnographic monitoring. The outline is as follows: "Chapter 2. Step 1: Consulting teachers and Principals" deals with questions such as: how is the research question collaboratively shaped; what can teachers and principal contribute to ethnographic research; and how can the researcher create knowledge in collaboration with stakeholders that is usable for these stakeholders. The chapter shows the language ideologies that weigh upon the policy of Mayflower Primary School. Moreover, attention is paid to Miss Potter's view on narrative. In "Chapter 3. Step 2: Observing relevant behavior" I engage with questions such as: how are the issues that are identified during Step 1 reflected in concrete behavior; what does the daily routine in the transition class consist of; what is the role of inequality in this class; and how does the teacher either support or misrecognize the children's voice. "Chapter 4. Step 3: Discussing the findings" and "Chapter 5. Step 4: Taking Stock" are chapters that represent a pilot of the last two steps. I aim at showing what kind of results can be achieved during these steps by means of respectively discussing the analyses with the teacher, and distilling a pedagogical perspective on narrative, which illustrates the concrete value of storytelling in the classroom. The goal of this pedagogy is that it can be effectively applied in other classes with minority children. The basis for such pedagogy is the knowledge that stakeholders, in this case Miss Potter, already (implicitly) have. Chapter 5 also contains concluding remarks.

## **Chapter 2. Step 1: Issues teachers and principle are concerned with** ***Voice, narrative, language ideologies and teaching material***

### **§2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I illustrate the first step of ethnographic monitoring with reference to the research project I carried out. The first step is to consult stakeholders in the field. In the field of education, these include for instance teachers, principal, parents and pupils. These stakeholders are asked to identify the issues they are mostly confronted with in the classroom. Identifying the issues that concern the stakeholders mostly demands time and patience since some issues might be taken for granted by them (Van der Aa & Blommaert 2011). Since ethnographic monitoring is crucially cooperative, this first step, together with the observation of behavior in the classroom (step 2) can result in a reconsidering of the topic of research: “that is exactly what ethnographic monitoring does: ... it rapidly re-positions and re-aligns the research plan with the interests of its main stakeholders” (Van der Aa & Blommaert 2011: 328).

This chapter deals with the teachers’ and principal’s stories and thus focuses on interviews and meetings with them, in order to shed light on the teachers’ and principal’s language ideologies; Miss Potter’s need for usable teaching material; and her concerns with narrative and voice. In this chapter, I also explain why the transition class at Mayflower Primary School is an interesting and relevant case for ethnographic monitoring. The twofold goal of this chapter is on the one hand providing an image of Miss Potter’s concerns as well as the policy of the school, which is located at the meso-level. On the other hand I aim at demonstrating the first step of ethnographic monitoring. Taken together, this chapter will make a start in showing how carefully listening to the teacher’s voice can lead to hearing this voice for what it is: a valuable construct of knowledge and experience. This is an argument that will be taken further in following chapters.

### **§2.2. Voice as suspected issue**

Due to ethnographic monitoring’s insistence on voice, it is implied that schools that are already seen as problematic, or where it is suspected that voice is an issue, are preferred (Van der Aa & Blommaert 2011: 323). For my research I was interested in classroom narratives drawn from sociolinguistic environments where the language of instruction is not the first language of the pupils involved. In this transition class children have to make meaning in a language they are assumed to be insufficiently proficient in. This makes this transition class one of the areas where voice is a suspected issue: making meaning in a language the pupils are not yet fully proficient in results in a

struggle to make themselves understood, a struggle thus to accomplish voice. Due to the exponential increase of diversity in schools, these institutions have become institutional environments wherein the accomplishment of voice is problematic.

The composition of this transition class is characterized by what is called superdiversity. The composition of the transition class is an issue I will return to in §3.4, for now I want to focus on voice as suspected issue in an educational context wherein superdiversity prevails. The concept of superdiversity refers to the ways in which, during last decades, migration patterns have become less predictable, which has resulted in a dynamic and complex interplay of variables such as country of origin, migration channel and legal status. Level of education, age, religion, gender, local identity and so forth are no longer predictable based on country of origin since, compared to 1950-1970s migration, today's immigrant groups are "newer, smaller, transient, more socially stratified, less organized and more legally differentiated" (Vertovec 2010: 86). From a sociolinguistic point of view, superdiversity has resulted in a situation wherein resources are no longer tied to static speech communities, but spread in unpredictable ways: the connection between linguistic resource and speech community has become dynamic and complex and *a priori* assumptions about people's linguistic repertoires have lost their value (Blommaert 2010). Due to superdiversity, the assumption of stable communities with predictable linguistic resources is no longer valid: this assumption has to be replaced by a view of fluid communities (Blommaert & Backus 2011).

Superdiversity can be understood in at least two ways. First, it can be understood as a phenomenon: we assess that superdiversity is visible in many ways and in many places in current society (Vertovec 2010). Second, and in second instance, it can be understood as a paradigm: once it has been determined that superdiversity influences reality continuously and in manifold ways, our assumptions about this reality are challenged and we have to come to novel understandings. According to Blommaert and Rampton (2011):

Over a period of several decades – and often emerging in response to issues predating superdiversity – there has been ongoing revision of fundamental ideas (a) about languages, (b) about language groups and speakers, and (c) about communication. Rather than working with homogeneity, stability and boundedness as starting assumptions, mobility, mixing, political dynamics and historical embedding are now central concerns in the study of language, language groups and communication. (p. 4)

The second understanding of superdiversity, superdiversity as paradigm, entails the first one: superdiversity as phenomenon. Let me put it this way: the phenomenon of superdiversity has caused the paradigm shift Blommaert and Rampton (2011) describe. In this thesis I consider superdiversity mainly as a phenomenon rather than as a lens.

Superdiversity in the classroom has become the rule rather than the exception while institutions are still adjusting to this changed reality. Schools are believed to

provide everyone access to the resource that is the norm. This is assumed to be democratic, since everyone gets the chance to acquire it. Any existing inequality then, is not due to the institutional system, but to the pupils themselves (Hymes 1980). With increasing superdiversity, uniformizing of, for instance, linguistic resources easily becomes the mainstreaming of those *who are already part of the mainstream* since only they can meet the standards (Blommaert 2008a). This educational system is believed to be an illustration of democracy, whereby a system of ‘equal opportunities’ perpetuates existing actual inequalities (Id.: 449) as the opportunities are far from equal: the access to education as well as to the norm one has to adhere to is highly stratified. Schools define certain people as inferior because they cannot meet the norms, and based “*on the seemingly neutral nature of language*” (Hymes 1980: 110, original emphasis), whereas language is anything but neutral: it is a ground not only for opportunity, but crucially also for inequality due to unequal access. This unequal access reinforces the issue of voice that was already present in the transition class due to the making of meaning by the pupils in a language they are assumed to be insufficiently proficient in: not only do they have to fulfill this difficult task, but also they are subject to very differentiated access to the language they have to learn while at the same time they have to adhere to a uniform, homogeneous norm. As a result, the pupils in the transition class have no choice but using all there is to use in their repertoire (Blommaert 2010) in order to make meaning. The children are dependent upon the teacher’s flexibility toward the usage of the linguistic resources in their repertoires, but also toward their implicit, sociocultural ways of making meaning (Blommaert 2008a), as can for instance be seen in the implicit poetic structure of their narratives (see Chapter 4 for an analysis). When the focus is only on easily observable and explicit linguistic resources and when children are not allowed to use all there is to use in their repertoires, the chances that voices are misheard increase.

### **§2.3. The teachers’ and principal’s language ideologies**

At Mayflower Primary School, there are three transition classes. Transition class 1 is for children from 4 to 6 years old; Transition class 2 is for children whose ages range from 6 to 9 and in Transition class 3, the class wherein the fieldwork took place, the pupils are 9 to 12 years old. The team of transition class teachers consists of 5 women. Miss Young is the teacher of Transition class 1. Transition class 2 has two teachers: Miss Grey and Miss Brown. Both teachers have a part-time job. These two teachers have extensive experience with teaching immigrant children as a result of the period they worked as teachers at the asylum seeker’s center. Due to their experience and knowledge about teaching Dutch as a second language, by the other transition class teachers Miss Brown and Miss Grey are regarded as having more expertise. The three transition classes share one tutor, Miss Tall. She assists the teachers of the three classes according to a schedule. Her task is mainly to help with individually explaining exercises to the children. When

the children in Transition class 3 have to work individually, or in small groups that count up to 4 pupils, Miss Potter and Miss Tall together help children who need assistance.

During the fieldwork, I organized interviews with the teachers of Transition class 2 next to the interviews with Miss Potter in order to get an idea of their language ideologies. A language ideology is defined as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine 1989: 255 as cited in Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). The significance of taking into account language ideologies “for social as well as linguistic analyses [is] because they are not only about language. Rather, such ideologies envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology” (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 55-56). With Miss Potter and with the teachers of Transition class 2 I discussed the policy regarding the usage of other languages than Dutch in the classroom as well as their attitudes toward this. There appeared to be a discrepancy between the policy and the teachers’ ideas about this. Shortly after the interviews, a meeting with the teachers and tutor of the three transition classes was organized. The teachers regularly had meetings with all teachers of Mayflower Primary School - a regular school with, next to the regular classes, three transition classes. This was the first time that a meeting with only transition class teachers was organized to exchange experiences and discuss issues related to the transition classes. Soon enough the topic of other languages than Dutch popped up. In the first part of the discussion, Miss Brown and Miss Grey carefully announced that they sometimes allowed the use of other languages than Dutch in the classroom. Miss Potter, Miss Tall and Miss Young appeared not to have too strong opinions about this, and the five of them were searching for an authority to base their point of view on. When the conversation continued, all teachers leaned toward a positive attitude regarding other languages than Dutch in the classroom: they all mentioned several advantages of allowing other languages. It seemed as if, in the beginning of the conversation, all teachers were carefully exploring each other’s opinions: there appeared to be a Dutch-only rule and they did not want to confess that they were breaking the rule, until it appeared that they all, at least in some circumstances, allowed the usage of other languages than Dutch. From that point onwards they started orientating toward another authority, an authority that did support allowing the usage of other languages than Dutch. Part of the conversation is transcribed in Example 2; a translation is to be found in the appendices.

*Example 2: Meeting teachers transition classes, January 2012*

01. Miss Brown: Wie heeft er afgesproken of je je eigen taal wel of niet mag spreken
02.               wie heeft dat...
03. Miss Tall:     O ja dat punt nog da’s ook wel belangrijk

04. Miss Young: D-dat was [zo toen wij hier kwamen en jij hebt mij dat uitgelegd]  
 05. Miss Potter: [Dat was er al toen wij kwamen en ja xxx]  
 06. Miss Young: [en ik heb dat  
 07. Miss Potter: Ja [en ik heb dat ook over genomen]  
 08. Miss Brown: Wie [heeft dat gezegd?]  
 09. Miss Young: [Ja laten we dat soort dingen zeker even bespreken]  
 10. Miss Potter: Ik denk Suzanne, Ilse en Ria, die hier [toen werkten]  
 11. Miss Brown: [Ooo, [niet op  
 12. directie-niveau ((laughs relieved))]]  
 13. Miss Young: [Maar  
 14. we hebben voortschrijdend inzicht he?]  
 15. Miss Potter: Nou ja, Henk ((former principle)) ook, Henk heeft ook wel eens tegen  
 16. mij gezegd [dat dat de regel was]  
 17. Miss Grey: [We hebben het wel eens oogluikend toegestaan, niet als  
 18. kinderen zo on=  
 19. Miss Brown: =zo onaardig  
 20. Miss Grey: Weet je als je met je lessen bezig bent, weet je, dan niet.  
 21. Weet je, het is eigenlijk, eigenlijk wijst het zich vanzelf hè. Maar we  
 22. hebben vooral toen wij bij één van die studiedagen waren dat één  
 23. mevrouw dat ook zei, weet je, die pleitte er juist voor dat kinderen hun  
 24. eigen taal ehh spraken, dat ze zich dan konden uiten. Ja, natuurlijk ook  
 25. wel gericht hè, dat je het af en toe toestaat.

*An extensive discussion about situations wherein allowing other languages than Dutch is either convenient or inconvenient follows. The teachers mention that speaking another language than Dutch is allowed during eating fruit or at the playground – these moments are ‘free moments’ for the pupils. Furthermore it is allowed when a child feels sad; when pupils can translate for each other or explain something to another child – a clear example of a situation wherein speaking other languages than Dutch doesn’t disturb the lessons but rather supports it. Here the point of view ‘not during lessons’ is nuanced by the teachers: they acknowledge that other languages than Dutch can also support the lessons, and in that case it is allowed and seen as useful. The teachers also mention the usefulness of other languages than Dutch for the children to enable them to reminisce about their past with each other, something the teachers find important. Situations wherein they find that it is not convenient that another language than Dutch is spoken are: when other pupils have the feeling that they are excluded; when the home language is used for cursing or swearing; and when it disturbs the lessons. The teachers agree with each other that allowing other languages than Dutch can be very convenient and important for the children as it allows them to “express themselves”. They hold the view that pupils themselves feel very well when it is allowed to speak another language than Dutch and when it is not allowed.*



26. Miss Young: Nou, zullen we het dan gewoon  
 27. Miss Tall: Ja  
 28. Miss Grey: Maar je weet wel van [nou]  
 29. Miss Young: [gewoon] van aan, aan de situatie en  
 30. de leerkracht zelf laten.  
 31. Miss Brown: Ja  
 32. Miss Young: Ik bedoel want we zijn allemaal kundig genoeg om dat zelf in te  
 33. schatten [wanneer dat kan]  
 34. Miss Brown: [Precies]  
 35. Miss Young: En dan, dan is er gewoon niet meer echt een verbod.  
 36. Miss Brown: ((reads aloud while composing the minutes)) Leerkracht bepaalt  
 37. wanneer een eigen taal gesproken wordt.  
 38. Miss Brown: Moedertaal, niet een eigen taal. Okee.  
 39. Miss Brown: ((reads aloud while composing the minutes)) Niet alleen maar  
 40. negatief.  
 41. Miss Young: Nee, want da's, ja, zoals jullie het uitleggen is dat ook wel zo.  
 42. Miss Potter: Hm-m. Ja.  
 43. Miss Brown: Ja, dat zei die mevrouw bij de LOWAN.  
 44. Miss Potter: Ja.  
 45. Miss Young: Goed maar daarom is het ook [goed om met elkaar over te  
 46. praten]  
 47. Miss Grey: [Het was voor ons ook van o ja]  
 48. weet je, ja, zie je, hè hè ((relieved)), het is nou  
 49. Miss Brown: Ja  
 50. Miss Grey: legitiem, weet je, je deed het eerder al, maar dan hoor je het ook  
 51. nog van iemand die  
 52. Miss Young: [Ja]  
 53. Miss Potter: [Ja]  
 54. Miss Grey: wiens mening wel zwaarder telt of weegt  
 55. Miss Brown: Ja  
 56. Miss Grey: dan die van ons, dan in het werkveld.  
 57. Miss Brown: Okee.

In line 04-07, Miss Young and Miss Potter stated that there was a rule when they started working at Mayflower Primary school, and that they had just adopted this rule. They refer to a Dutch-only rule here. In line 10 Miss Potter mentioned that the rule was prescribed by former teachers of the transition classes and Miss Brown was happy with that announcement because it seems that the rule was not prescribed by the management of the school. In line 15-16 Miss Potter said that the former principle also once told her that 'that' (i.e. not speaking Dutch) was the rule. Miss Grey, supported by Miss Brown, admitted in line 17-25 that they sometimes turned a blind eye to it, not in lessons, not when pupils use another language to be unkind, but that it is actually self-

evident when it's allowed and when it's not. She also referred to a lady at a workshop Miss Brown and Miss Grey participated in, who argued that children should be allowed to speak their 'own' language to be able to express themselves. Thus, in this first part (line 1-25), three 'authorities' were mentioned: the previous teachers of the transition classes, the management of Mayflower Primary School and 'the lady at the workshop'.

In the second part of the conversation (line 26-57), the teachers were inclined to having a positive opinion about the usage of other languages than Dutch in school. They agreed that they themselves are capable enough to decide whether it is allowed or not and that the ban is no longer there. In line 43-56, Miss Brown and Miss Grey again referred to the lady at the workshop. It appeared that the mentioned workshop was a workshop of the LOWAN, the '*Landelijke Onderwijs Werkgroep voor Asielzoekers en Nieuwkomers*': the National Education Study Group for Asylum Seekers and Newcomers. Miss Young and Miss Potter agreed with allowing other languages than Dutch. At the end of the conversation, Miss Grey showed a stronger tendency toward allowing other languages than Dutch than she did in the first part (line 1-25). In the first part she said that they sometimes 'turned a blind eye to it'. At the end of the discussion (line 47-56) about this topic, she said: 'For us it was also like, 'o yes', you know, yes, you see ((relieved)), now it's legitimate, you know, you already did it, but then you also hear it from someone who, whose opinions have more weight or value than ours, in the field of education'. Here she admits that Miss Brown and Miss Grey had allowed speaking other languages than Dutch in the classroom for a long time and that it was a relief to them when they found out that an authority in the field of education agreed with them. As I said before, in this discussion, in total three authorities were mentioned: the former teachers, the management and the lady at the workshop of the LOWAN. The authority that was the closest to the practice in class in terms of distance and time is the management: the former teachers had left the school and the LOWAN is a national study group. Nevertheless, the teachers together solved the issue with as crucial argument the opportunity for the pupils to express themselves, i.e. to achieve voice. To be able to solve the problem in favor of the children's voice, the teachers choose to adhere to another center: that of the LOWAN.

Another point that attracts attention is Miss Brown's correction in composing the minutes (line 36-40). She read aloud what she was writing down. First she wrote down '*Leerkracht bepaalt wanneer een eigen taal gesproken wordt*' (Teacher decides when an own language is being spoken). Then she immediately corrected herself: 'Moedertaal, niet een eigen taal' (Mother tongue, not an own language). In line 23, Miss Grey had mentioned the term 'eigen taal' (own language) without being corrected, but when it came to a more conscious activity – composing the minutes – Miss Brown immediately corrected herself. It seems as if she didn't want to talk about languages as objects, as being someone's property. This is particularly interesting when we compare it to the next example.

During the fieldwork, Mayflower Primary School had no principal: the former principal had left and the school did not have a new principal at that time. For the time being, Miss Mary, the deputy principal, was the acting principal. Miss Mary had been working at Mayflower Primary School for decades and she was also in charge of the care for children with special education needs. In an interview I asked Miss Mary about the school's policy regarding other languages than Dutch in the classroom and about the allowed flexibility toward that policy. The excerpt can be found below; a translation is to be found in the appendices.

*Example 3: Interview with Miss Mary, acting principal, February 2012*

01. Kristel: En ehh, de omgang met de, met de, met de verschillende ehh
02. moedertalen die de kinderen meebrengen, in hoeverre is daar in
03. het beleid voor de school ehh ruimte voor om die in de klas te
04. spreken, of is de regel dat het alleen Nederlands is?
05. Miss Mary: In principe alleen Nederlands wordt er gesproken. En ja, en soms
06. heb je wel eens dat ehh, zeker als een kind net, net op school is en
07. nog geen woord Nederlands spreekt en je hebt een uhh een
08. leerling die dezelfde taal spreekt dat je als leerkracht kan zeggen
09. van 'nou vertel dat eens even hoe dat hier gaat' in de bepaalde
10. taal maar in principe spreken we Nederlands hier op school.
11. Kristel: Okee en wat is de gedachte daar achter?
12. Miss Mary: Omdat die kinderen in Nederland wonen, een verblijfsvergunning
13. hebben, en proberen zo snel mogelijk Nederlands te leren.
14. Kristel: Ja.
15. Miss Mary: In alle plekken waar ze hier zijn.
16. Kristel: Ja. En heb je het idee dat er in de, in de praktijk flexibel wordt
17. omgegaan met die regel of dat ehh, dat leerkrachten zich daar wel
18. strikt aan houden?
19. Miss Mary: Ja, ik bedoel, soms als jij iets duidelijk wil maken aan een kind en hij
20. verstaat jou totaal niet, en hij verstaat wel een Duits, of hij verstaat
21. wel een Engels, dan zul je daar ook nog wel eens naar toe terug
22. grijpen en ik bedoel, daar d=, daar doen wij niet moeilijk over.
23. Kristel: Nee. Maar dan is het vooral als redmiddel zeg maar.
24. Miss Mary: Als redmiddel.
25. Kristel: Ja.
26. Miss Mary: Maar de spreektaal, in principe wordt er gewoon Nederlands
27. gesproken.
28. Kristel: Ja. Okee.

In this example we find an understanding of language that contrasts with Miss Brown's view on language. When Miss Brown wrote down 'own language' she immediately corrected herself into 'mother tongue'. Although I have to be careful with my conclusion here, it seems that she did this because she did not want to treat languages as objects, with people who owe these objects. Miss Mary showed the contrary: in line 20-22 she speaks about 'a' German ('een Duits') and 'an' English ('een Engels'). Here language seems to be understood as an object by Miss Mary, an object that can be went *back* to (*'naar teruggegrepen'*) by the teacher when this is absolutely necessary in order to make something clear to a pupil. It seems very likely that Miss Mary expresses here a modernist view on language: language as related to a nation-state (Blommaert and Backus 2011) and a territory. German 'belongs' to Germany and English 'belongs' to, among other countries of course, Great Britain. When this language was used by the teacher to make something clear to a pupil, according to Miss Mary this implied a 'going back', probably to the homeland of the children.

The majority of Example 3 deals with the school's policy regarding other languages than Dutch. In line 5-10 Miss Mary summarized this policy. 'In principle' only Dutch is spoken. Other languages than Dutch could sometimes be used when a pupil has only just entered the class and doesn't speak a single word of Dutch. When there is a child in the class who speaks the same language, this child could act as interpreter to translate the rules (*'hoe dat hier gaat'*: how things happen here) the pupils need to obey to. It did not become clear what Miss Mary exactly means with 'here': the Netherlands, the school, or the class? In line 12-15 Miss Mary defended the Dutch-only policy by saying that it is there because the children live in the Netherlands, have a residence permit and try to learn Dutch as soon as possible, everywhere they are. The fact that the children are living in the Netherlands and that they have a residence permit obliges them, according to Miss Mary, to learn Dutch as soon as possible *everywhere they are*. In line 19-24 Miss Mary said that the rule is not flexible: teachers follow it rigidly although the management doesn't give them a hard time when the teachers use another language than Dutch in the very specific case that something needs to be made clear to a child and 'he totally does not understand you' while he does understand German or English, but only as a remedy (*'redmiddel'*). In line 26-27 she underlined her statement by saying that 'in principle' simply Dutch ('gewoon Nederlands') is spoken. Thus, other languages than Dutch are allowed for the pupils when they use it to explain the rules to new children and for the teachers to make something clear in German or English. This is a much smaller range of functions than was discussed by the teachers of the transition classes. Also the teachers' flexibility toward 'only Dutch' and their decision not to have a ban on other languages anymore was contrasting with the management's rigid uptake of the rule. This supports the idea of the teachers' choice for another center: the teachers did not take the management of the school as their center of authority, but the LOWAN in order to be able to make a choice in favor of the children's opportunities to achieve voice. According to the official policy of the school, pupils should not be allowed to speak other languages than Dutch, which limits the children's ways to make meaning.

Miss Mary stated that at Mayflower Primary School, simply Dutch ('gewoon Nederlands') is spoken. For the immigrant children in the transition classes, Dutch is of course anything but simple. The accomplishment of voice here potentially becomes extra problematic for the pupils. It seems that this difficulty is subsequently – at least partly - leveled out by the teachers of the transition classes by means of their choice for another center of authority.

## **§2.4. Issues Miss Potter is concerned with: narrative, voice and teaching material**

### ***§2.4.1. Miss Potter on narrative and voice: the teacher as agent in the construction of knowledge***

Transition class 3 was the class wherein the fieldwork took place. During the fieldwork I organized an interview with Miss Potter about narrative and voice and about other issues she was concerned with. One of these issues was the lack of clear and usable teaching material. In this section, I pay attention to Miss Potter's view on narrative and voice and to her concerns with the available teaching material. In doing so, I present two examples that are in topic and content related to the example in section §1.1.3. Furthermore, I will include an excerpt from the interview.

In the first example in this section, Example 4, Miss Potter defines narrative on her own terms and she determines the place of narrative in the educational discourse in the transition class by means of commenting on how she sees narrative and the competences developed in the pupils' stories. A translation of Example 4 is to be found in the appendices.

*Example 4: Miss Potter's definition of narrative, January 2012.*

Vertellen zie ik echt als in dat je iets kwijt wil. Het is niet ik stel - ja nou ja dat kan trouwens ook, ik stel een vraag en een kind vertelt daar iets over, maar wel dat het iets is wat het kind zelf mee komt, zelf bedenkt zeg maar. En daar zelf iets van een verhaaltje van maakt in eigen woorden. Ja, dus dat kan zijn naar aanleiding van een vraag die ik stel of iets wat er gebeurd is. Ja, ik denk eigenlijk dat heel veel wat hier in de klas gebeurt eigenlijk vertellen is, want tijdens de Woordenschat komt er heel veel vertellen in voor, en over het weekend bijvoorbeeld en ja, ik denk wel dat het een hele centrale plek in de klas heeft, het vertellen, ik denk dat heel veel dingen vertellen zijn.

Miss Potter's definition of narrating as wanting to get something off your mind (*'iets dat je kwijt wil'*) shows that she viewed narrative as providing opportunities for 'clearing' one's head. This ties in with the third function of sharing time - as providing space for narrative performances: in stories, the children may be able to accomplish voice. She also referred to the second function of narrative - making a connection between home and school and shifting between these perspectives - , albeit more implicitly: *'Ja, ik denk eigenlijk dat heel veel wat hier in de klas gebeurt eigenlijk vertellen is [...] over het weekend bijvoorbeeld'* (Yes, I actually think that a lot of what happens here in the class is actually telling [...] about the weekend for instance). Stories the children tell about their weekend experiences are experiences from their home life. It is during sharing time that there is space for such experiences.

Miss Potter's almost analytical account of narrative ties in with considering narrative as important mode for making sense of the world: as I argued in section §1.1.1, human beings need narratives for shaping experiences and for imposing order on otherwise disconnected events (Ochs and Capps 1996: 19), so as to create continuity and coherence in the world surrounding them. Additionally, Miss Potter mentioned the importance of hearing children on their own terms (Blommaert 2008b) by firstly defining narrative as something the child comes up with by itself, thinks about itself (*'iets ... wat het kind zelf mee komt, zelf bedenkt'*) and secondly by emphasizing the making of a little story out of something *in own words* (*'iets van een verhaaltje [maken] in eigen woorden'*). Interestingly, hereby Miss Potter refers to the importance of understanding and hearing a child's voice and to the opportunities stories provide in this respect. She did so without being aware of the existence of voice as analytical concept.

In determining the position of narrative in the class, Miss Potter stated twice the important place of narrative in the class discourse by saying 'I actually think that a lot of what happens here in the class is actually telling' (*'ik denk eigenlijk dat heel veel wat hier in de klas gebeurt eigenlijk vertellen is'*) and by arguing that she thinks that it has a very central place in the class and then repeating that she thinks that a lot of things are actually storytelling (*'ik denk wel dat het een hele centrale plek in de klas heeft, het vertellen, ik denk dat heel veel dingen vertellen zijn'*). Without being aware of it, Miss Potter's view is perfectly feasible with the view of narrative as default mode of human communication (see §1.1.1). Miss Potter mentioned the storytelling about the weekend and the class activity *Woordenschat* ('Vocabulary'). *Woordenschat* was explicitly aimed at expanding the children's Dutch vocabulary. The children would typically have to learn a number of words, and as part of the learning process they could tell a story with regard to one of the words they had to learn. For more information on the class activities wherein narrative performances were central, see Chapter 4.

During the interview it appeared that Miss Potter consciously used procedures to shelter the children from feelings of anxiety and to support them in the making of

meaning. When I asked her about these procedures, she came up with an extensive list. This list can be found in Example 5. A translation is to be found in the appendices.

*Example 5: Miss Potter's procedures to support the pupils, January 2012.*

Net na de vakantie heb ik ze eerst een tekening laten maken van 'Wat vond je leuk?' en 'Wat vond je minder leuk?' Sommigen vinden het ook heel lastig om dan ineens van 'Oké, wat heb je gedaan?'. En dan moeten ze nog gaan denken en dat ze dan van tevoren al kunnen bedenken 'Nou, dit.'. Dat ze dus ook al kunnen gaan nadenken van 'Hoe kan ik dat vertellen?' als ze aan het tekenen zijn en dat ze ook een houvast hebben aan die tekening, dat bijvoorbeeld als ze die dan laten zien, dat iedereen al ziet van 'O vuurwerk' of zo. Dat ze daar naar kunnen verwijzen en dat de andere kinderen ook al een beetje weten van 'Nou, daar gaat het verhaal over'. Dus dat doe ik vaak als ik echt een vertelkring doe. Ik laat de kinderen vaak ook vragen stellen. Dat ze zelf vragen mogen bedenken en aan de ander stellen en inderdaad ja, vragen stellen, maar soms geef ik zelf ook wel eens opties. Dus kinderen die er nog niet zo lang zijn die gewoon nog niet veel kunnen praten en wel al begrijpen, ehh ja, dat ik een aantal dingen opnoem van 'Heb je dit gedaan? Heb je dat gedaan?'. Ook van simpele dingen van 'Heb je gegeten?' van 'Ja.' 'Wat dan?' en soms kunnen ze dat dan wel zeggen. Of dat ik op die manier probeer om de wat makkelijkere dingen eruit te halen die ze misschien wel al kunnen zeggen, of, of alleen maar 'Ja' of 'Nee' kunnen zeggen. Ik heb ook wel eens gedaan van een boek met allemaal plaatjes, ehh, dat bijvoorbeeld een hele grote bladzijde met allemaal sporten erop en dat ze dan, dat je vraagt 'Nou, wie vindt wat een leuke sport?' 'Wanneer heb je dat gedaan?' 'Met wie heb je dat wel eens gedaan?' en dat ze zo ook dingen kunnen aanwijzen, waardoor ze niet alles hoeven te zeggen, maar ook met plaatjes zeg maar kunnen het kunnen vertellen. Ehh en... Ja ik denk dat dat de belangrijkste dingen zijn.

By means of the procedures she mentions, Miss Potter aimed at preparing the children for their narrative performance by asking them to draw what they want to tell in order to force them to think about their topic before confronting them with the task to tell a story. In doing so Miss Potter aspired to acquire material that the pupils can use to support their stories, namely their self-made drawings. Another way of supporting the children in telling a story was the use of questions by means of asking the children a one-or-multiple choice question ('soms geef ik zelf ook wel eens opties') and instructing the children to ask each other questions ('Ik laat de kinderen vaak ook vragen stellen') in order to help the narrator to make meaning.

The procedure of asking questions and encouraging other children to ask questions helps the children in acquiring two other genres: answering questions and asking questions. Here another example of the pedagogical potential of narrative becomes visible: narrative is subject to either macro- or microgenre and this provides opportunities for paying attention to acquiring these genres. When children had just entered the transition class, Miss Potter aimed at helping them to express themselves by means of simple questions they only had to answer with 'Yes' or 'No', and by using books with pictures to enable pointing to the answer. In doing so she acknowledged the importance of storytelling in the daily routine in the class, because storytelling provides the children an opportunity to be heard on their own terms, that is, to accomplish voice; and because of the pedagogical potential of narratives.

What we see here is support for Hymes's view that teachers are close to knowledge and that they may even be closer to it than most linguists (see §1.2). Ethnographic monitoring offers a concrete method to optimally make use of this knowledge. Teachers may either consciously or unconsciously possess implicit or explicit knowledge that is needed for ethnographic research. This knowledge resides in the teacher's voice that can be mobilized in the process of ethnographic monitoring. The concept of voice can shape ethnographic research not only as a conceivable problem ('What opportunities and limitations are there for people to accomplish voice?'), but also as part of an epistemological stance by recognizing its potential. Not only do teachers possess knowledge that researchers may be looking for, but they do so from a particular part of view, that is, an insider's point of view. It is this point of view that distinguishes ethnography from other branches of science.

#### ***§2.4.2. Miss Potter on teaching material: searching for grip***

Another concern Miss Potter expressed during the interview was the need for teaching material that offers more 'grip', especially when it comes to grammar. At the time of the fieldwork the transition classes did neither have a fixed method for grammar, nor for spelling. Therefore it remained unclear to Miss Potter what the hierarchy of the learning units should be and what the children should be capable of once they have finished their year in the transition class. In Example 6, Miss Potter utters her concerns on this topic. A translation is to be found in the Appendices.

*Example 6: Miss Potter on teaching material, January 2012.*

- |     |              |  |
|-----|--------------|--|
| 01. | Miss Potter: | De grammatica is vaak, ja, nog best lastig, ook omdat ze hier niet |
| 02. |              | echt grammatica krijgen, behalve werkwoordspelling en ja           |



03. natuurlijk ook, ja, er zijn natuurlijk wel heel veel dingen
04. grammatica, zoals ook groot, groter, grootst en dat soort
05. oefeningen doen we ook, en maar en om dat, om daar zinnen mee
06. maken. Maar er is niet echt een vaste methode nog niet, voor
07. spelling.
08. Kristel: Voor grammatica [bedoel je]?
09. Miss Potter: [Voor grammatica ja]. En voor spelling ook niet
10. trouwens, en voor grammatica. En daardoor is het ook, dat is ook
11. het nadeel van deze methode, waarom we gaan overstappen nu op
12. die andere, het is heel erg naar eigen inzicht, wat bied je aan en wat
13. vind je dat ze nog niet kunnen en doe je, er is niet een vaste lijn van
14. vandaag ga je dit doen of en uiteindelijk moeten ze dat hebben
15. geleerd, dat, ja, dat hebben we gewoon nog niet, dus daarom is dat
16. ook heel ja, een beetje, ja, onoverzichtelijk zeg maar.
17. Kristel: Op het gebied van grammatica?
18. Miss Potter: Ja.
19. Kristel: Waarom is er ooit voor deze methode gekozen?
20. Miss Potter: Er zijn sowieso haast geen methodes voor ehh NT2 onderwijs
21. omdat dat gewoon ehh, ja er zijn niet veel klassen en blijkbaar
22. brengt dat niet genoeg op om daar een methode voor te
23. ontwikkelen zeg maar. En deze methode is zelf ontwikkeld door de
24. vrouw die hier les gaf, in schakelklas 2 was dat toen, en nog een
25. andere vrouw, die hebben die zelf gemaakt en dat is dus al een
26. aantal jaar geleden.

*Miss Potter goes on to explain that they will start with a new method in a few months. Miss Brown and Miss Grey are familiar with this method since they had used it in the asylum seekers' center. None of the teachers is happy with the new method, but there appears to be nothing else, and especially Miss Young and Miss Potter feel like they need more 'grip', more clarity. The method they were using at the time of the fieldwork was very old-fashioned. The method they would start using shortly after the fieldwork is the only available method. Therefore they are going to start using it although they are not enthusiastic. The new method offers more and clearer grammar, including a learning path.*

The method that was used at the time of the fieldwork was found not to be of sufficient quality according to the transition class teachers. The method was developed by the previous teachers of the transition classes and according to the current teachers it was old-fashioned and unclear. Furthermore there were no handles for grammar and spelling lessons. A new method was on the way, but the teachers already knew that, although this new method does provide more clarity when it comes to teaching grammar, this method would also be far from ideal. Unfortunately, due to reasons of

money, no other methods are available: because a method for teaching Dutch as a second language on primary schools would only be targeted at a small number of teachers and pupils, this method would not be sufficiently profitable.

The situation in the transition classes at Mayflower Primary School was, taken together, as following: there was a lack of a clear method, and the management prohibited the usage of other languages than Dutch in the classroom, although these other languages allow the pupils to make meaning and despite of the chances other resources in the children's repertoires may provide for learning Dutch. The children were declared language-less by the management and the teachers were faced with the difficult task to, on the one hand, offer the pupils opportunities for accomplishing voice, and on the other hand, to teach Dutch, situated within a field of tension between a Dutch-only policy and a refusal to implement this policy in the classroom. This was a highly challenging task that demanded an enormous amount of creativity and commitment on behalf of the teachers.

In the foregoing, it appeared that narrative carries a pedagogical potential that is – maybe implicitly and unconsciously – made use of by Miss Potter. In this thesis I aim at exploring these possibilities and at examining if it is possible to further develop this perspective on narrative, along the lines of ethnographic monitoring, toward a narrative pedagogy.

## **§2.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have demonstrated the first step of ethnographic monitoring by means of illustrating this first step with data from the fieldwork in Miss Potter's transition class at Mayflower Primary School, a class wherein voice was a suspected issue. When attending meetings and interviewing teachers and acting principal it appeared that there was a discrepancy between the teachers' language ideologies on the one hand and the management's language ideologies and the policy that follows from these ideologies on the other hand. This discrepancy was solved by the teachers in favor of support for the pupils' struggle for voice. Other issues that were identified during an interview with Miss Potter had to do with a lack of teaching material as well as with narrative and voice and Miss Potter's view on these topics, a view that ties in with a view of narrative as default mode of human communication and of narrative as basic to human understanding of the world. In sum it appeared that the teachers of the transition classes are faced with a difficult task that demands creativity, commitment, and flexibility.

During the first step, the ethnographer is searching for information that is already there (Hymes 1996) and that can be thoroughly asked for. However, the researcher must not expect that all the knowledge one has can actually be asked for:

some knowledge is implicit and may be taken for granted to such an extent that one is not able to mention it when it is asked for. With Hymes (1996):

The meanings which the ethnographer seeks to discover may be implicit, not explicit. They may not lie in individual items (words, objects, persons) that can be talked about, but in connections that can only gradually be discerned. The deepest meanings and patterns may not be talked about at all, because they are so fully taken for granted. (p. 9)

In the second step of ethnographic monitoring exactly this aspect is addressed, as this step is concerned with the systematic observation of all relevant behavior. As such, also 'the deepest meanings and patterns' can become part of the inquiry, since these may become visible in people's behavior.

It has become clear that the teachers of the transition classes are in need of teaching material. Narratives are already present in the educational discourse and to some extent there is made use of the pedagogical potential of narrative. It is worth the effort to systematically investigate how the pedagogical potential of narrative can be taken further. Exploring this potential may result in a narrative pedagogy that shows how narrative can be a learning mode. This pedagogy then can effectively be applied at Mayflower Primary School and in other classes at primary schools, in order to let teachers as well as pupils fully benefit from the potential narrative offers. The exploration of such as pedagogy is exactly what I aim at in the remainder of this thesis.

## **Chapter 3. Step 2: Observing relevant behavior**

### ***Inequality in Miss Potter's transition class***

#### **§3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter attention is paid to the second step of ethnographic monitoring. This step consists of the observation of all the behavior that is deemed relevant to the issues that were identified during step 1 as represented in Chapter 2. In this chapter I first sketch what the second step is comprised of and how this step, together with step 1, results in a shaping and reshaping of the topic of research. In the remainder of the chapter I aim to show that (socio)linguistic repertoires are complexes of traces of power; that these complexes follow a person's biography (Blommaert & Backus 2011); and that factors such as home language affect the position of Dutch in the pupils' repertoires and, consequently, of the various learning modes for the pupils. Within this context I pay attention to the superdiversity in the transition class and we will see that this superdiversity quickly turns into inequality. I provide a broad description of the differences and inequalities in the class. Once the inequalities in the classroom have become clear, I show Miss Potter's attempt to level out inequalities by, among others, allowing the children to use all there is to use in their repertoires (Blommaert 2010). Taken together, the chapter provides insight into step 2 of ethnographic monitoring by means of linking observed behavior to a broader framework of linguistic inequality and linguistic repertoires, so as to give a broader picture of the transition class as well as to show how the teacher aimed at negotiating inequalities. Eventually Miss Potter's efforts to overcome inequality resulted in an ambiguous image of the accomplishment of voice.

#### **§3.2. Shaping and reshaping the research question**

The second step of ethnographic monitoring consists of observing behavior that is relevant to the issues that were identified during the first step in different contexts in the classroom and, if possible, also out of the classroom (Hymes 1981b: 5). In this research project, the issues that were identified during step 1 were the following: first, there was the discrepancy between on the one hand the policy regarding using other languages than Dutch in the classroom, and the language ideology of the teachers of the transition class on the other hand. Second, a lack of a clear methodology for grammar and spelling was identified by Miss Potter, and, third, Miss Potter appeared to be concerned with the difficulties for the children to accomplish voice within their stories, in a language that they are assumed to be insufficiently proficient in. The next step is then to identify behavior that sheds light on these issues. It is in this process that I as ethnographer slowly gained an insider's position.

During step 1 and 2 of ethnographic monitoring the initial research question is likely to change due to the contact with the field. The observed behavior as well as the interviews to identify the problems the stakeholders encounter may lead to a different image than was expected before the fieldwork started. As a result, during step 1 and 2, the research question may need to be shaped and reshaped until the topic of interest suits the reality in the classroom. Before the start of the fieldwork I expected to find accentuated inequalities in the transition class, resulting in limited opportunities for the pupils to accomplish voice in their narratives. This expectation was based on the literature on narrative practices in education (e.g. Michaels 1981; Hymes 1996; Blommaert 2008a). The examination of the literature led to a particular interest at beforehand as well as to certain expectations concerning these phenomena. I expected that the pupils' narratives would only be evaluated in terms of immediately observable linguistic features such as grammar and phonology. This language ideology of (phonemic) immediacy suits the Dutch education system. It is an ideology wherein linguistic knowledge is considered as consisting of features that are immediately observable. Children's communicative skills and linguistic knowledge are assumed to be directly visible in the expressions the children display and as a result the children's command of language can be judged based on the observation of these expressions. Based on this ideology I expected that the pupils' grammatical, phonological and lexical mistakes would be immediately corrected during the storytelling. I expected that this correction would eventually result in silencing of the pupils' voice and in an evaluation of the pupils' narratives as substandard due to the misrecognition of the children's stories.

During the fieldwork, another image arose. Pupils were relatively free to use all there was to use in their repertoires (Blommaert 2010) in order to create meaning: if possible, they could use other languages than Dutch to explain what they meant and another child with the same language in its repertoire would act as interpreter. Crucially, this did not remove the existence of linguistic inequality in the transition class, since if none of the children was proficient in the language of the other child and consequently none of the children was capable to interpret for the other child, this solution would not work. As a result languages wherein more than one child was proficient in and wherein one child could interpret for another child provided an advantage for the children. This is inevitably an instance of linguistic inequality – one language offers more opportunities than another – but there appeared not to be *accentuated* inequality: the teacher was aware of the inequalities in the class and as a result she aimed at leveling out these inequalities instead of reinforcing them. Miss Potter's goal was to facilitate the accomplishment of the pupils' voice by means of negotiating the inequalities she is positively aware of.

By paying careful attention to Miss Potter's voice, it became clear that focusing on the reinforcement of linguistic inequality would create an incomplete picture of the daily practice in the transition class. Moreover, it would neglect Miss Potter's enduring efforts to overcome exactly this issue and, as a result, it would do injustice to the efforts

of Miss Potter. To conclude that there are still traces of linguistic inequality in this class would be stating the obvious for the teacher in this class. When the ethnographer wants to go beyond the level of stating the obvious for the ethnographees, step 1 and 2 of ethnographic monitoring provide opportunities for defining the actual problems in the field.

### **§3.3. Biographical repertoires as complexes of traces of power**

The pupils in the transition class form a linguistically, socially and culturally heterogeneous group, originating from various countries and domiciled in the Netherlands for divergent reasons. The composition of this class is thus superdiverse in various ways, as I will show more elaborately in §3.4. The pupils' linguistic repertoires, among others, are clearly characterized by superdiversity. As becomes clear in what follows, linguistic repertoires reflect a person's biography (Blommaert & Backus 2011). The term repertoire is used to refer to all the means of speaking that a person has at his/her disposal and that s/he knows how to use and with what purpose in communication (Id.: 3). Such means include linguistic ones, i.e. language varieties, but also cultural ones (e.g. genres and styles) and social ones, i.e. norms for the production and comprehension of language (Id.: 3). Due to the heterogeneity of the backgrounds and life stories of the children in the transition class, the makeup of their linguistic repertoires differed from child to child. Repertoires follow a person's biography since we have to learn various ways of speaking during our life, meaning that repertoires have to adapt to both time and place (Id.: 9).

With regard to adaptation to time: in a particular phase of life we are expected to speak in a way that fits with that particular phase. For instance during our childhood we are expected to use child-like language, and after childhood, our language use has to become more adult-like in order to be accepted. Consequently, linguistic repertoires do not expand gradually: a young child's vocabulary grows explosively (Id.: 10). With every stage of life we have to learn other languages, i.e. add other resources to our repertoires. Perhaps unnecessarily, resource here refers to the whole complex of entirely new linguistic resources (for instance second language learning in school); accents; codes; genres (for instance writing an academic paper); registers; modes (literacy learning); and styles. Regarding adaptation to space: in a particular space we need a particular resource in our repertoire to make sense of ourselves, i.e. to produce voice, to be communicatively competent. We learn a language once it is useful; needed; or even obligatory in the space and time we live in at that moment. Language is thus closely related to mobility since our physical mobility may show us that the resources in our repertoire "appear to have restricted mobility" (Blommaert 2005: 95). – i.e. they do not work in another space – and we have to come to the decision that another language has to be learned (see Blommaert 2010). As a result voice becomes a more salient problem

when people start migrating and start maintaining transnational relationships with each other. Seen from this perspective, voice becomes the “capacity to accomplish functions of linguistic resources translocally, across different physical and social spaces. Voice, in other words, is the capacity for semiotic mobility” (Blommaert 2005: 69).

The relation between repertoires, the learning of languages and inequality becomes clear in the mere existence of the transition class: the pupils in this class had to learn Dutch because they had migrated to the Netherlands. The pupils needed a certain command of Dutch to be regarded as communicatively competent. Dutch was required to fully accomplish voice. Here it becomes clear that a repertoire is a “complex of traces of power: a collection of resources [one has] to accumulate and learn in order to make sense to others” (Blommaert & Backus 2011.: 23). Without a certain command of Dutch, pupils in the Dutch educational system are not authorized or not capable to produce meaning. Silencing of a voice results in a lack of accomplishment of voice since one only has voice “when someone else ratifies it as such” (Id.: 23). As the pupils in the transition class live in The Netherlands, it was believed that they need to add Dutch to their repertoires in order to follow a satisfactory school trajectory. This illustrates that language is a social and cultural instrument: every child in the Netherlands has to learn Dutch. When a resource has to be added to a repertoire in order to accomplish voice, this resource is never equally accessible to everyone due to reasons of political and economic power. This is where inequality pertains to learning patterns. As I discussed in Chapter 1, one instance of linguistic inequality can be found in the observation that people prefer one language over another in a particular domain and, subsequently, that there are differences in the accessibility of acquiring resources for humans, as a result of differences in power and money. As will become clear, it is perceived more positively when a child speaks English fluently than when a child is proficient in Somali. The preferences for a particular language are arbitrary in the sense that they have little to do with intrinsic qualities of the linguistic features of a language, but instead stem from political and social circumstances.

### **§3.4. Linguistic, social and cultural diversity in the transition class: from superdiversity to inequality**

#### ***§3.4.1. The superdiverse composition of the transition class***

The political and social undercurrents of the existence of a transition class constitute the macro-context wherein the transition class is situated. In the Dutch political debate some politicians have a clear focus on the perceived negative effects of particularly the presence of non-Western and/or Islamic immigrants. These politicians, most notably Geert Wilders and his PVV (‘Partij Voor de Vrijheid’; Party for Freedom) reiterate problems of multiculturalism and focus on the need for assimilation for newcomers. In

this debate language has an emblematic function. There are of course very sound practical reasons for immigrant children to learn Dutch, but the undercurrent of the existence of transition classes also resides in the belief of the necessity of Dutch as prerequisite for integration and for being successful in society, an ideology that is not only present in classes in primary schools. Blommaert (2008a) has pointed out that this focus on local resources is typical for current processes of globalization: the flow from center to periphery is characterized by international resources (for instance English) whereas the flow from periphery to center is characterized by the valuing of local and regional values and resources: in the Netherlands, immigrants have to learn Dutch, not English.

The emblematic function of language in the integration/assimilation debates can be illustrated with a quotation from the English letter that is used to inform the parents of the children who are about to enter a transition class:

In the Netherlands many people are worried about children's language deficit. Children get behind in other subjects at school because of their disadvantage in the Dutch language. This also reduces their chances of completing further education and finding a suitable job. In other words, they will have fewer opportunities later in life.

In this information letter for parents, it is emphasized that 'many people are worried about children's language deficit' and these worries are linked soon enough to the children's general opportunities in life. Thereby the link between acquisition of Dutch and opportunities in life in a broad sense is established. The letter shows that the mere existence of a transition class is based upon the assumption that children need proficiency in Dutch in order to become successful in their educational career and in life in general, implying that the children need to have a particular level in Dutch to make meaning in society, that is, to achieve voice.

It is this ideology that has resulted in the founding of the transition classes. Mayflower Primary School and its transition classes are situated in a city with over 150.000 inhabitants in the Southeastern part of the Netherlands. The population of the neighborhood the school is located in had the following makeup at the time of the fieldwork: 70% had a Dutch nationality; the remaining 30% had a nationality other than Dutch<sup>2</sup>. The linguistic ecology in this working class neighborhood included among others the Surinamese, Antillean and Moroccan language as well as a local variety of Dutch.

The pupils in the transition class received intensive language training for one year in a relatively small group. Whereas in Dutch regular education children often stay in the same group for the whole period of the primary education, and the class is usually formed at the beginning of a school year, in this transition class, children could enter the

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from municipality website.



class at every point in time and they usually left after maximally one school year, more or less regardless of their proceedings. By consequence, the group dynamics in the transition class were constantly changing due to the enduring changes in the composition of the class. As a result of the goal of the transition class, the curriculum of this class was explicitly targeted at acquisition of the Dutch language. Crucially the aim was functional learning. For instance the pupils' spelling mistakes in written exercises would not always result in lower grades and the children's grammatical errors in telling stories would usually not be immediately corrected. The clear focus of Dutch language acquisition meant that the pupils do not have classes in biology, geography and history. Only little time was spent on math, social emotional development, gym and handicraft: the vast majority of the time was spent on Dutch language training. The transition class's target group consisted of (immigrant) children whose command of Dutch was considered substandard compared to their peers, with an average or above-average intelligence. The transition class is not obligatory for all immigrant children.

The diversity in the class was striking: the pupils appeared to form a linguistically, socially and culturally highly heterogeneous group. The children originated from various parts of the world, namely Iraq (1 child); Somalia (3 children); Turkey (1); Canada (1); Armenia (1); Poland (1); Latvia (1); Cameroon (1); Macedonia (1) and Estonia (1). They had all arrived relatively recently in the Netherlands, up to 10 months before their arrival in the transition class. They were domiciled in the Netherlands for a variety of reasons: amongst the children were refugees, labor migrants' children, expatriates' children and children who had emigrated for reunification of the family. The legal statuses of the pupils and their families also differed: some children had a permanent residence permit whereas other children's residence permit was limited. Their home situations varied accordingly: one girl lived in an asylum seekers center; other children lived with their parents and/or stepparents in a flat or middle-class neighborhood. In most children's homes, the Dutch language was not spoken as the children's parents were not or only limited proficient in Dutch. However for three children the home language was (partly) Dutch, for instance due to a Dutch stepparent. Other home languages for the children were Polish (1 child); Lithuanian (1 child); Russian (1); Macedonian (1); English (2); Somali (3); Armenian (1); Arabic (1); and Turkish (1). Among the children there was an enormous variation in educational experience. Some children had never visited a school before their migration, whereas other children had had full education in their home country, and one girl had been educated at home by her mother before their migration. Thus, among the children there was variation in their experience with education, and more specifically in their experience with education in a Dutch, or similar to Dutch, education system, resulting in differential access to Dutch education: some pupils could more easily adhere to the norms in a Dutch class than others. In sum, the superdiverse population of the transition class and the enormous variation in factors such as educational experience, first language, literacy, country of origin, migration channel, home situation and home language resulted in very differential access to Dutch language education.

There were large differences observable between the children's progress in the learning process that not all could be attributed to differences in intelligence. For some children it was easier to reach the goals of the year of intensive training than for others since for some children it was easier to gain access to the Dutch language and/or to the Dutch educational system due to factors such as educational experience and home language. As a consequence of the superdiversity and because children entered the class continuously throughout the year, the differences in Dutch competence among the children were huge. Issues of power and (linguistic) inequality appeared to constitute the daily reality in this transition class in several ways: the heterogeneous repertoires of the children and their opportunities to achieve voice by means of the resources in their repertoires (an English-speaking pupil could communicate in this language with Miss Potter since she was proficient in English, while a Somali-speaking child could not); preference for one language over another; large differences in the children's proficiency in Dutch and in their progress; the focus on Dutch and not on other languages in the curriculum; and the enormous differences in access to the Dutch language and to the Dutch educational system among the children. A concrete example of linguistic inequality in the transition class is provided in the next section.

#### ***§3.4.2. Linguistic preference: Isabella's ascribed qualities***

During the weekly recurring curricular activity *Leefstijl* ('Lifestyle'), attention was paid to the children's social-emotional development. Examples of the assignments that the children would have to complete were: writing down what they are good at; writing down when they are happy and when they are angry. The pupils were often encouraged to support their assignments with drawings. Afterwards the assignments were discussed in class, usually in a playful way.

In the week this particular fragment was recorded, the children were asked to write down compliments for each other: for every child in the class, they had to write down one thing they saw as a special quality of that child. Afterwards these pieces of paper were collected. For every child Miss Potter read out loud what the pupils had written down about him/her. When the ascribed qualities of Isabella were read out loud, the following happened (a translation is to be found in the Appendices):

*Example 7: Miss Potter reads aloud Isabella's ascribed qualities, January 2012.*

01. Miss Potter: ((reads aloud)) Praten. Engels praten. Teken en. Spelen leren
02. rekenen. Zingen. Goed spelen. Mooi meisje. Schrijven.
03. Kinderen helpen.
04. Miss Potter: Dan hebben we ze gehad.

Isabella was 10 years old at the time of the fieldwork. She was born in Vancouver, Canada and lived there for almost 10 years. She had been educated mainly at home during 5 years. Isabella had the Dutch as well as the Canadian nationality. Isabella's mother had the Dutch nationality and was born in the Netherlands. At Isabella's home English as well as Dutch was spoken. Among Isabella's ascribed qualities were 'talking' and 'writing'. Due to the extent to which she had been exposed to Dutch, it was not surprising that she was progressing relatively fast when it came to Dutch proficiency. Compared to one of her classmates with whom she shares a table in the classroom, Isabella's access to the Dutch language is much easier: Said was 12 years old and was born in Mogadishu, Somalia. He had the Somali nationality. Said and his family migrated from Somalia to the Netherlands almost 2 years ago. He had not been educated in Somalia and at Said's home Somali was spoken. Clearly, Isabella had been embedded more often in situations wherein Dutch was spoken. Her fellow pupils noticed her progress and her proficiency in both speaking and writing and value it as something Isabella does very well. The differential access to Dutch is a clear case of linguistic inequality and this is underscored by the fact that the children attributed Isabella's progress to something she effectively did by herself.

Another quality of Isabella that one of the pupils had written down is 'talking English'. As I said before: Isabella is from Canada, she had been educated in Canada, and English, together with Dutch is still her home language. Thus, it was not surprising that her command of the English language was better than that of the other children. Nevertheless, when the other children's qualities were read out loud, it appeared that no other child was complimented with the command of his mother tongue and/or home language: Said's command of Somali, for instance, was not noticed as something he 'does well'. I do not consider this to be a coincidence: during the fieldwork the other children were eager to learn some English from Isabella, a willingness that did not occur when it came to other languages. It seemed as if the other children were aware of the usability of English in a broad range of domains, or of the prestige that this language carries. This had resulted in an evaluation of Isabella's English proficiency as more positive than other children's proficiency in other languages. Here we find a concrete instance of linguistic inequality in the transition class of Miss Potter.

### **§3.4.3. Dutch within the children's repertoires**

As I have shown in the foregoing, the pupils' repertoires differed enormously and so did the ways the pupils were exposed to various languages. This had an effect on the way the pupils acquired Dutch, as this language had another position in each of the pupils' diverse repertoires.

Blommaert and Backus (2011) have distinguished several ways of language learning, related to the place a language has in a repertoire. They argue that a repertoire is "functionally organized" (p. 19) and that there are "no two resources that ... have the same range ..." (Id.: 19) and function within one's repertoire. Each language is learned to fulfill specific tasks within a specific phase of life and in a specific space. This means that someone's linguistic resources are there to perform social roles; and that repertoires are the result of life trajectories. The transition class is an example of the need for other resources when people are subject to mobility: the children needed to learn Dutch because they had, for divergent reasons, moved to the Netherlands.

Four learning modes have been distinguished by Blommaert and Backus (2011). Not all of them are formal learning modes. The reason to pay attention to all four modes is to show the broad range of ways wherein people can learn a language. Distinguished are: embedded language learning; encounters with language; specialized language learning; and comprehensive language learning. *Embedded language learning* is the learning of bits of a language that can only be used if they are embedded in a sentence in another language. We can think of for instance language related to Facebook: in Dutch, it is perfectly fine to say '*Ja, die foto op Facebook heb ik gezien. Ik heb 'm zelfs geliked.*' (Yes, I saw that picture on Facebook. I even *liked* it). Here a conjugation of 'to like' – meaning 'to click Facebook's like-button' – is based on Dutch grammar and embedded in a Dutch sentence. Embedded languages do not form an autonomous resource in a person's repertoire: we can only use these bits of language as embedded in a sentence in another language. *Encounters with language* result in the acquiring of very small bits of language. These bits range from the expressions people once used temporarily in a specific setting, for instance during holiday or as part of an age-group, to languages we don't speak, write or comprehend but that we nonetheless recognize in spoken and/or written form. These two modes of language learning are often informal: we encounter these languages and learn these meanings and expressions informally. These modes of learning do not follow formal learning trajectories wherein, for instance, a teacher teaches grammar rules. The knowledge of languages that are learned in these modes is often temporarily: the languages are used during a limited amount of time, and after that time, they often lose usability and, as a result, people (partly) forget what they had learned.

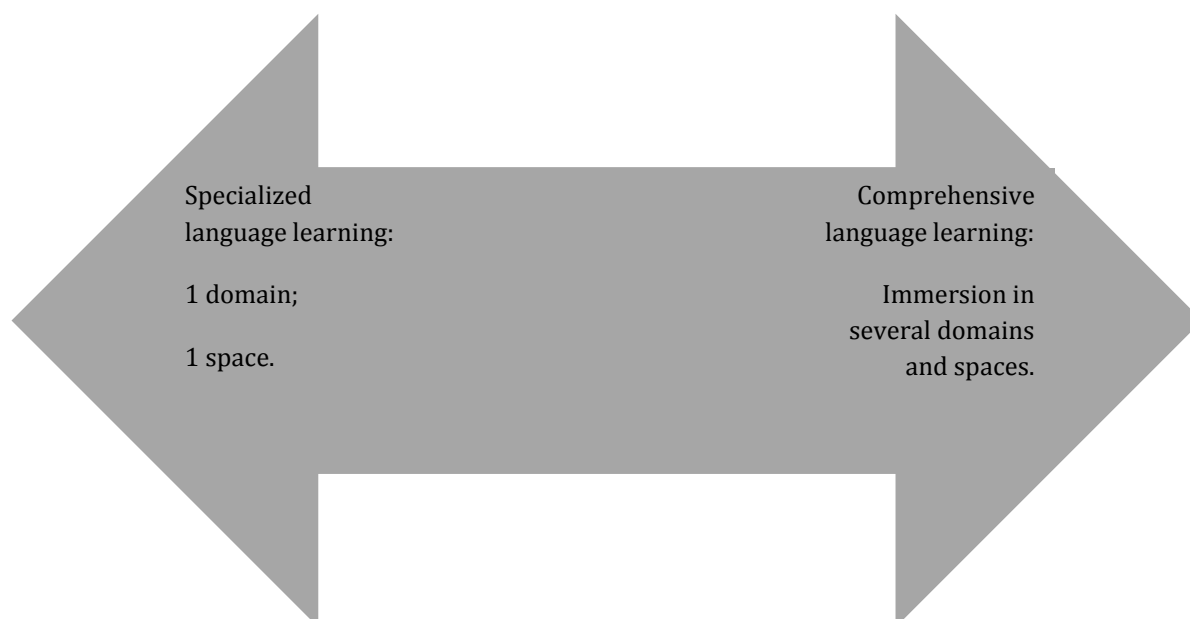
For an understanding of the different modes wherein the pupils in the transition class learn Dutch, comprehensive language learning and specialized language are the

most relevant modes. People are most often seen as ‘fully competent’ in a language when one of these two learning patterns is followed. These two ways of language learning continue through the lifespan and often the languages are at least partly formally learned. It must be noted that someone can never know all of a language, i.e. all registers: a lawyer will often not be proficient in IT terms and an IT engineer may not be able to understand legal terms. Comprehensive and specialized language learning are the most essential learning modes since these ways of language learning allow people to achieve voice: in languages wherein a child only has very limited competence, the accomplishment of voice becomes very difficult and needs support, for instance by allowing the child to use all s/he has in his/her repertoire.

*Specialized language learning* is the way we learn a language during a particular stage of life and in a specific place. School language, for instance, is a specialized register we only use in a specific place, i.e. in school. Another example is the language teenagers speak with each other: they may use curses they would not use in a discussion with their parents. *Comprehensive language learning* refers to being fully socialized in this language. As a result, comprehensive language learning comprises the learning of different accents, registers and modes of a language. A language that is comprehensively learned is the outcome of a learning trajectory that comprises being immersed in language use in different domains. Thus, apart from at school, the language is also used at home, among friends, in the supermarket and during playing sports. This enables someone to rapidly acquire new varieties and to recognize regional or local varieties (Id.).

I want to argue that these two categories are not rigidly separated but, instead, that they form a continuum with on one pole language learning in one specific domain and one specific space (specialized language learning), and on the other pole language learning through immersion in different domains (comprehensive language learning). This idea is visualized in table 1.

Figure 1: Continuum language learning



Since learning modes are highly connected to where, how and how often the resource is used, the different learning modes imply a different place of the learned language in someone's repertoire. As we have seen, in the transition class there were considerable differences in the children's home languages. These differences imply a variable position of Dutch in the repertoires of the children. For some children, like Isabella, learning Dutch was a case of comprehensive learning, whereas for other children, like Said, learning Dutch was specialized language learning, ultimately resulting in differential access to learning Dutch due to different learning modes for different children.

### §3.5. The teacher's attempts to level out inequality

#### §3.5.1. *The creation of a genre*

In an educational setting such as this transition class the teacher plays a major role in either the accentuation or the leveling out of inequality. When it comes to issues of inequality in the transition class, the most important is not the way the pupils speak Dutch, but *the way their speech is taken up* by Miss Potter: according to Hymes (1980), "to achieve equality within a given language, it would never be enough to change the way people speak. One would have to change the way people speak is taken to mean" (p. 110). By consequence, the opportunities to decrease inequality reside in how the way

the children speak is perceived and supported, in the extent to which the resources the pupils are allowed to make use of are restricted to only Dutch, and in whether other resources in the pupils' repertoires are considered as valuable resources. Previous research has shown that immigrant children are often declared illiterate and languageless (Blommaert et al. 2006b as cited in Blommaert 2008a). The existence of other (socio)linguistic resources is then ignored instead of regarded as useful knowledge. In the process of learning Dutch in the transition class the teacher aimed at a certain leniency when it came to the use of other resources than Dutch, in order to support the children's struggle for voice - a leniency that becomes easier to imagine when other resources than Dutch in the children's repertoires are taken as valuable. This leniency is determined by questions such as: to what extent is there a constant emphasis on directly observable linguistic features and immediate correction? Does the teacher restrict the children's narratives? Is there space for deviant content, format, style, patterning, resources? In what follows, the leniency for the children becomes concrete in two ways: by means of constructing a genre wherein the children were supported to tell a story and by means of allowing the children to use all there is to use in their repertoires. However, both procedures also have their disadvantages and their restrictions when it comes to the accomplishment of voice.

As I showed in §2.4.1, Miss Potter aimed at creating a space for the accomplishment of voice for the children in a classroom characterized by inequality. Miss Potter mentioned several procedures to protect the children from feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, among others asking questions and encouraging the pupils to ask each other questions. This resulted in the construction of a particular genre, the interview, wherein narrative functions as a micro-genre. This genre was introduced and reinforced in several ways during the pupils' narrative performances.

In the transition class, narrative performances found their place among others during the activity *Vertellen* ('Telling'). At the time the narrative activity *Vertellen* ('Telling') is scheduled, Miss Potter would take the lead by announcing that the class is going to „tell“. She asked the children to place their chairs in a circle, boys and girls alternated. Then she introduced the activity by explicitly mentioning the interactional and social norms during this group discussion (see §4.3). The children were instructed to tell something about the weekend. They had to select one topic, being the activity they enjoyed the most during last weekend. One of the children who offered to tell a story is Lucine. Lucine is an Armenian twelve years old girl. At the time of the fieldwork, she had arrived in the Netherlands nine months ago. Two weeks after her arrival she entered Dutch education in the asylum seekers center school, which had now become part of the transition classes due to a decreasing number of pupils. Lucine lives in a room in the city's asylum seekers center with her parents and her younger brother. At home Armenian was spoken. Zareh, Lucine's brother, was part of one of the transition classes for younger children at Mayflower Primary School. Zareh is the protagonist of the story Lucine deploys. During Lucine's storytelling other actors were Miss Potter;

Anah, an Iraqi boy who was fond of sports; Danijela, a Macedonian girl; and Melissa, a girl from Cameroon. A translation of Example 8 is to be found in the Appendices.

*Example 8: Lucine's Story, January 2012.*

01. Miss Potter: Ehh Lucine, wat heb jij gedaan?
02. Lucine: Ehh... Ik heb met mijn broer winkels geweest, centrum. O nee
03. juffrouw. Mijn broer heb wedstrijd voetbal . Dan heb ik met mijn
04. moeder daar geweest en gekeken. Ja en ehh dan daar gekeken.
05. Miss Potter: Oké. Een vraag voor Lucine. Anah.
06. Anah: Heeft jouw broer gewonden?
07. Danijela: ((laughs)) Gewonnen.
08. Miss Potter: Ja, goede vraag.
09. Lucine: Ja.
10. Miss Potter: En waar voetbalt Zareh?
11. Lucine: Ehh... Juffrouw ik vergeten die stadsnaam. Is moeilijk nou. Ik weet
12. het niet.
13. Miss Potter: Was het niet in Havenaar?
14. Lucine: Hmm... Jawel.
15. Miss Potter: O, dat wel. Oké. Melissa?
16. Melissa: Hoeveel jouw broer heeft gewonnen?
17. Lucine: Ehh... 4-2.
18. Anah: Wow!
19. Lucine: ((proud)) Hm-m.
20. Miss Potter: Er zijn een paar kinderen die denken heel goed mee met vragen,
21. goed zo.

In Lucine's story the second function of sharing time is dominant: Lucine clearly deployed a story wherein she allows her audience to have a little look into her life at home: she told about her family and about what activities they undertook in the weekend.

The third function of sharing time - the opportunity to accomplish voice - is more ambiguously present. Through the format Miss Potter introduced she hoped to support the children in telling a story that is more elaborate than it would have been in another format. In the format she opted for there is also a role for the other pupils as audience and participants. Previous research has shown that voice can indeed be collaboratively accomplished in order to be heard (see Van der Aa 2012). Poveda (2002) also found that teacher and classmates can become "part of the effectiveness of the storytelling itself" by means of their responses (p. 272). In Lucine's story, the generic demands were initiated by Miss Potter. The structure emerged through the Question-Answer pattern.



Miss Potter reinforced this structure several times in three ways: she asked questions herself; she encouraged and allowed other children to ask questions; and she emphasized the appropriateness of a well-asked question. Lucine's storytelling started when Miss Potter initiated the narration by asking Lucine what she had done during the weekend (line 1), as a response to Lucine's raised finger. By asking Lucine what she had done, Miss Potter repeated the topic restriction: the story had to be about a recent experience. When Anah asked a question (line 6), Miss Potter responded by complimenting him upon the question (line 8), hereby ignoring Anah's small mistake that was corrected by Danijela (line 7). In doing so, Miss Potter reinforced the genre by letting the children know that asking questions is appreciated. When Lucine was expressing doubts regarding the name of the city where the football match was played, Miss Potter replied with a suggestion to Lucine (line 13), which Lucine accepted (line 14). Miss Potter ended Lucine's narrative performances by making a general comment regarding the questions children ask (line 20-21). Hereby she once more informed the children about the appropriateness of asking 'good' questions.

The children appeared to be able to adhere to the imposed structure: Lucine was aware of the fact that she was only allowed to narrate about one single experience. When she decided that she wanted to tell a story about her brother's football match instead of about the shopping (lines 2-4), she changed her topic, hereby addressing her teacher as audience by means of 'O nee juffrouw' ('O no Miss': line 2-3). Another instance of addressing Miss Potter as audience can be found in (line 11-12), wherein Lucine answered Miss Potter's question (line 10) by saying that she does not know the answer at this moment. The other pupils were also able to meet the standards of this genre since they asked questions that were explicitly valued as 'good'.

Due to its opportunities for suggestions from the audience, the interview-genre allows for collaboratively creating meaning. By asking questions, the pupils and Miss Potter contributed to Lucine's story. Lucine's narrative was structured as interview by Miss Potter, and as such it was co-created by Anah, Melissa, Danijela and Miss Potter herself. Anah (line 6; 17), Melissa (line 15) and Miss Potter (line 1; 10; 12; 15) asked questions to elicit information, Danijela clarified Anah's question (line 7) and hereby also contributed to the story. The interview-genre thus allows for a co-production of a narrative: Miss Potter's attempt to allow the children to tell a story succeeded. Furthermore, the making use of the shifting and layering of genres (interview, story, question, answer, feedback, suggestion, evaluative comments) allowed the children to learn different genres. The pedagogical advantage of the use of the interview-genre is that it typically allows for the inclusion of different micro-genres, which enables the pupils to acquire these genres and add them to their repertoires.

However, this is not all there is to say. In adhering to the norms of the interview, the pupils' opportunities to accomplish voice were at the same time confined. A disadvantage of the chosen format is that the turns in the interview-genre are often relatively short, which may restrict the story's plot and, as a result, also the further

development of the children's narrative skills – when the children were ready to tell a story in longer turns, which provides them more freedom in the structure they want to adopt, they usually could not do this within the interview-genre, which has relatively short terms. Furthermore the Question-Answer format limits the opportunities to deploy different story lines since, in response to a question, only a specific set of answers is appropriate. In the genre of an interview the question determines the plot of the story rather than the teller's individuality and creativity: the question determines and restricts a possible answer, which is not necessarily the line of story the pupil had selected. Moreover the children appeared to be quite repetitive in their set of questions: questions that were frequently asked were 'With whom did you do [the activity]?' 'Where did you do [the activity]?' and 'When did you do [the activity]?'. Due to Miss Potter's answers the pupils already knew that these questions would be evaluated as 'good questions'. For the pupils asking one of these formulaic questions was an easy assignment that did not have to be the result of particular interest in each other's stories. The formulaic questions resulted in formulaic answers, which means that the children were very well trained in exactly this set of questions and answers, but not in another set of questions and answers. Yet another restriction could be found in the limitation of the topic the pupils were allowed to talk about: they had to tell about a recent experience, in this case about the weekend, and they had to select one 'thing'. Of course there are sound practical reasons for this topic restriction: there was only a limited amount of time wherein Miss Potter aimed at providing each pupil a chance to tell a story. While the children were telling their story she wanted the other children to listen, which she thought would become more difficult when the stories are longer. Nevertheless this restriction did limit the children's opportunities to express themselves.

Taken together, this led to a picture wherein on the one hand pupils were supported in the making of meaning: pupils were able to adhere to the norms and they got the chance to learn different genres. On the other hand hearing the children *on their own terms* was restricted, as the terms on which they spoke were determined by others, most notably Miss Potter. Miss Potter's attempt to level out inequalities by means of the deliberate creation of a specific genre eventually resulted in an ambiguous situation that results in the pupils' opportunities to collaboratively make meaning while at the same time it limited the children's opportunities to speak on their own terms. It is this ambiguity I referred to in table 1 (see §1.1.2): when someone is heard at one's own terms but not allowed or capable to speak on exactly these terms, one can, but will not always be in the situation to, still, accomplish voice. This was the case in this example: Lucine could not speak fully at her own terms as these were restricted as a result of the generic demands, but at the same time she was heard at her own terms, which resulted in a partial and complex accomplishment of voice.

### ***§3.5.2. Getting children involved: miming and ‘using all there is to use’***

In her class Miss Potter’s leniency toward the children’s struggle became among others visible in her attempts to shield children who lacked particular resources in order to partly overcome the inequality and differences in the class. A teacher cannot completely level out issues of inequality in a classroom, but what she can do is being aware of it and searching for opportunities and solutions to shield and support the children. In educational settings the teachers plays a major role in the bringing about of a setting that is experienced as safe by the pupils. It is in such an environment that the opportunities for pupils to accomplish voice increase.

As I said before, one way of supporting the pupils in their struggle for voice is by allowing them to use other resources in their repertoire than Dutch. After all, the pupils in the transition class were faced with the difficult assignment to make meaning and tell stories in a language they were assumed to be insufficiently proficient in and, as has become clear in this chapter, which they did not have equal access to. At several moments Miss Potter searched for possibilities for getting the pupils involved in the class activities, also when these children had only just entered the class, or when pupils were too shy to initiate speaking out loud to the rest of the class. In looking for these possibilities Miss Potter was forced to be creative due to the differences in the pupils’ proficiency in Dutch: as I said before, the pupils in the transition class could enter the class at any point in the school year and as a result children who had had almost one year of intensive language training were in one class with pupils who had just started in the transition class. An example of a boy who had entered the class very recently (one week ago) is Hassad. Hassad was 10 years old and came from Turkey. During *Vertellen* (‘Telling’) Miss Potter did not omit to pay attention to Hassad. Hassad did not raise his hand to announce that he wants to tell a story, but Miss Potter shifted the attention toward him by asking him a question in exactly the same format as she had asked Lucine - a translation is to be found in the appendices:

*Example 9: Miming for Hassad, January 2012.*

01. Miss Potter: Ehh, Hasad. Wat heb jij gedaan?
02. Hasad: ((shakes his head))
03. Danijela: ((laughs))
04. Miss Potter: In het weekend? Heb jij gecomputerd ((mimes
05. typing))? Of gelezen ((mimes turning pages))? Of
06. televisie gekeken ((draws monitor in the air))?
07. Hasad: Nee.
08. Miss Potter: Is misschien nog lastig.

Here we see again how Miss Potter aimed at the fulfillment of the second function of sharing time: the questions she asked Hasad were clearly referring to Hasad's life at home. Miss Potter tries to help Hasad in expressing some information about last weekend. In doing so she was aware of the fact that she asked Hasad questions that he could not yet understand. As soon as the attention shifted to Hasad (in line 1), Hasad responded by shaking his head, resulting in a laugh on behalf of Danijela who was not surprised that Hasad could not answer this question. Miss Potter elaborated on her question and subsequently mentioned 3 options which she supported with mime in an attempt to get Hasad involved in this class activity on a level he can manage. Hasad's 'Nee.' ('No.') in line 07 can have different meanings. One possibility is that Hasad meant that he had not been at the computer, had neither read, nor watched television. Another possibility is that Hasad didn't want to respond, and it might also have been the case that he didn't understand the question or that he didn't know how to respond. This remains unclear as Miss Potter evaluated her own question as (too) hard ('lastig', line 08) at this moment for Hasad, hereby accepting responsibility for Hasad's difficulty to answer the question. In this fragment it becomes clear that Miss Potter had to display and does display creativity in her attempts to get children with different levels in Dutch involved in class activities, but it also becomes clear that, despite her creativity, this did not necessarily result in the making of meaning or accomplishment of voice for the children. Sometimes the assignment remained too hard for the pupils, or they felt too uncertain to speak out loud in front of the class.

Another attempt to get the children involved in the class activities is shown in what follows. During another *Leefstijl* ('Lifestyle') class, aimed at the social and emotional development of the children (for another example and a description of this activity see §3.4.1) the pupils had to write down things they either liked or disliked. This 'thing' could be anything: an activity, an object, a season, a person, etc. When the pupils were ready, the pieces of paper were collected and handed over to Miss Potter. Subsequently Miss Potter would read out loud the words the children had written down. Then the children had to stand up when they liked the mentioned activity or object, and when Miss Potter read out loud something they did not like they had to remain seated. When Miss Potter unfolded Amira's paper, she could not read the handwriting. Amira was 11 years old and she had come from Somalia 1 year ago. In the transition class there were two other Somali children: Said and Nasra. Amira was shy, quiet and timid and she usually spoke softly. Miss Potter was worried about her, as she had mentioned in conversations and written evaluations. When Miss Potter could not read Amira's handwriting during *Leefstijl* she asked Amira what she had written down. The following happened (a translation is to be found in the appendices):

01. Amira: ((whispers)) Ik weet het niet.
02. Miss Potter: Ja, maar, Amira, zeg het eens in het Somalisch, misschien dat
03. Nasra het weet.
04. Amira: Ik weet het niet.
05. Miss Potter: Jammer.

In an attempt to help Amira Miss Potter encouraged Amira to express herself in another way when she could not do this in Dutch. By means of asking Nasra, another Somali girl in the class, as interpreter Miss Potter aimed at enabling Amira to participate in the class's activity as well as to make meaning. In doing so Miss Potter showed that she regarded the resources in the pupils' repertoires as meaningful and as valuable linguistic-communicative instruments. Here Miss Potter tries to negotiate the differences and inequalities in the class by allowing and even encouraging children to use other resources in their repertoires when this is needed. Amira's '*Ik weet het niet*' ('I don't know', line 01 and line 04) can have two meanings: either she didn't remember what she had written down or she did not know if it's correct what she had written down and was afraid of saying something wrong. As was the case with Hasad, this remains unclear.

In both cases Miss Potter tried to support children in participation in class activities and in the making of meaning when they could not do this autonomously or when they felt too uncertain to speak out loud. The communication problems however were not solved. Despite Miss Potter's attempts to seek for procedures that fit with the children's need of that moment, she could not completely level out the existing inequalities.

### **§3.6. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have paid attention to the influence of the interviews with stakeholders and of the observed behavior on the research question. The remainder of the chapter was spent on discussing behavior that is relevant to the issues I discussed in Chapter 4. These issues concerned the use of other languages than Dutch in the classroom, the struggle for the children to accomplish voice and the need for creative solutions in a class without a clear method for language learning. During the observation it became clear that inequality was a major issue in the transition class due to the superdiversity when it came to factors such as country of origin, experience in education, encounters with Dutch, and modes of language learning resulting in differential access to Dutch. Although the teacher aimed in various ways to overcome this inequality, she did not

always succeed, since too many factors were of influence: the character of a child, the differences in the children's command of Dutch, the resources that were available via other pupils' repertoires and so forth. Ultimately these observations, together with the issues that were identified during the interviews as discussed in Chapter 2 determined the topics of interest during the research project and they also determined the point of view on these topics.

## **Chapter 4. Step 3: Discussing the findings**

### ***Ethnopoetic analyses of Danijela's and Anah's story***

#### **§4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I delve into the pupils' narratives. In doing so I make use of ethnopoetics, a method that allows for the examination of the concrete workings of voice, power and inequality. I illustrate this methodology by means of an analysis of a narrative from one of the pupils in the transition class. Then I present an analysis of a story told by another child. The stories were collected during two different activities in the class. In both activities narrative was central, but the generic norms the children had to adhere to were different during these two moments. I have brought the second analysis back to Miss Potter and discussed part of the findings with her. Just like the other chapters, this chapter has a twofold purpose: I provide an analysis of the pupils' stories and at the same time I want to show what kind of knowledge can be generated by means of the third step of ethnographic monitoring, as well as how bringing back knowledge can lead to change.

The third step of ethnographic monitoring comprises sharing the findings with stakeholders (Hymes 1981b) as identified in Chapter 2. This chapter as well as the next should be regarded as representing a pilot of the third and fourth step of ethnographic monitoring: I aim at showing *what kind of results* can be achieved by means of respectively discussing the analyses with the teacher (this chapter), and by means of distilling a pedagogical perspective on narrative that illustrates the value of storytelling in the classroom and that could also be effectively applied in other classes with minority children (Chapter 5). The basis for such pedagogy is the knowledge stakeholders already implicitly have. This knowledge finds its concrete place in the process of ethnographic monitoring in the first step, where attention was paid to the topics teachers and acting principle were concerned with, and in this third step, since during the third step the findings are presented to the stakeholders and the stakeholders are explicitly asked to comment on the research results as well as to provide feedback to the ethnographer. For practical reasons, I have discussed and evaluated the results of the analysis only with Miss Potter. The goal of this third step is that teachers attend to a detailed representation of the activities they carry out unconsciously and, in doing so, that they become more conscious of what they do and what the effects of their behavior are. As we will see, this also works, albeit on a smaller scale, when the findings are discussed with only one teacher.

## §4.2. Demonstrating ethnopoetics: Danijela's story

### §4.2.1. *The underpinnings of ethnopoetics*

Ethnopoetics has appeared to be most productive where 'different systems of meaning making meet' (Blommaert 2006a: 181). Educational settings where children have different linguistic repertoires and different cultural backgrounds, such as Miss Potter's transition class are a case in point: the pupils have to make sense in a language they are assumed to be substandardly proficient in, whereas this language is Miss Potter's mother tongue. In such settings, ethnopoetics becomes, according to Blommaert (2008b)

a program for understanding voice and *the reasons why voice is an instrument of power* with potential to include as well as to exclude. It becomes a critical *ethnographic and sociolinguistic* programme that offers us a way into the concrete linguistic shape of linguistic inequality in and across societies. (p. 18, original emphasis)

By showing the workings of linguistic inequality and its concrete shape, ethnopoetics directs the researcher to issues of power and voice. This results in ethnopoetics being a methodology that on the one hand is interested in the way narrative is culturally shaped, but on the other hand, the locus of ethnopoetics has always been the individual voice of the narrator. As such, ethnopoetics has the potential to empower vulnerable voices (Id.). It is this voice, which ethnopoetics can show and restore, by "[visualizing] the particular ways – often deviant from hegemonic norms – in which subjects produce meanings" (Blommaert 2006b: 266). To make sense of an ethnopoetic transcript, awareness of the resources the participants bring into the narratives is important. These resources may be unequal in usefulness or prestige - as we have seen with regard to the transition class when it came to the pupils' appreciation of Isabella's proficiency in English (see §3.4.2). In the transition class there were always differences in command of the used resources among pupils. Moreover, pupils with very different backgrounds had unequal access to the demanded resource, while they were ultimately measured against the same standards when they had to produce a narrative that met the expectations of the audience (teachers and classmates) and that fulfilled the generic demands.

According to Blommaert (2006a), ethnopoetics is particularly productive in areas "where narratives determine people's fate" (p. 181). Ethnopoetics can provide tools to understand this process. In Miss Potter's transition class the pupils' fate was determined by their narrative performances in the sense that their storytelling was judged. 'Telling' was something that was explicitly judged on the pupils' school reports, and the advice they received about the class they could go to after the transition class was based partly on their school report and thus partly on telling. Blommaert (2006a) has noticed that "in institutional encounters marked by inequality, unclear stories either remain unregistered or quickly become 'bad' stories" (p. 184). When stories of the pupils in the transition class were unclear they were indeed regarded as 'bad stories'



and the children were subsequently regarded as substandard storytellers. This is supported by Miss Potter's view on 'the best storytellers of the transition class'. In an interview I asked her whom she thought were the best storytellers and why. She mentioned Bartek and Isabella, for reasons that can be found in Example 11 (translation to be found in the Appendices).

*Example 11: Miss Potter on the transition class's best storytellers, January 2012.*

Zij zijn wel allebei zoiets van, 'Nou ja ik wil iets kwijt en ik zoek ook elke mogelijkheid om het te ve- ja kwijt te kunnen', zeg maar. En doordat zij veel praten en veel willen vertellen leren ze ook gewoon sneller omdat ze – ja ik weet niet, dat gaat gewoon sneller als je het vaker doet. En, nou ja, ik begrijp ze altijd als ze iets willen vertellen.

Whether Miss Potter understands the pupils was an important consideration for Miss Potter in her judgment on the children's storytelling skills: she regarded Bartek and Isabella as good storytellers because she always understood them when they want to tell something ('ik begrijp ze altijd als ze iets willen vertellen'). In this institutional environment clear stories appeared to be regarded as good stories and it follows logically that unclear stories were regarded as 'less good'. Ethnopoetics makes visible another layer of meaningful structure, namely poetic structure, and in institutional environments another ground for perceiving stories as meaningful is useful when it comes to decreasing inequality: when a story is perceived as making sense, the chances that it is regarded as 'good' increase and so do the chances that the teller's voice is heard. In taking unclear stories as bad, ethnopoetics can thus serve as way out exactly by showing the implicit poetic structure as a meaningful structure. Based on this meaningful poetic structures, ethnopoetics can show that pupils can have problems with some forms of linguistic-communicative competence, but at the same time have a well-developed narrative competence (Id.: 185).

One of the assumptions underlying ethnopoetics is that *stories have a narrative structure that supports the content of a story*: "what there is to be told emerges out of how it is being told" (Id.: 182). Topic and form are related by means of implicit poetic patterning that differs from culture to culture, from repertoire to repertoire, from person to person, from language to language, from context to context and so forth. Hence the focus on places where "different systems of meaning making meet" (Id.: 181): in a class with a variety of cultural backgrounds and repertoires such as Miss Potter's transition class, these different systems came to meet.

Another assumption underlying ethnopoetics is that storytelling is the default mode in human communication (see §1.1.1): *people need narratives to make sense of the world they are part of and narrating is a culturally shaped way of speaking*. An ethnopoetic transcript aims at “rendering performance features of the oral narration” (Blommaert 2005: 88). Ethnopoetics thus embarks on reformatting transcriptions of spoken texts in order to include the performance aspects of the spoken narrative in the transcribed version of the story. The choice for the method of analysis is already part of the analysis, since it forces the researches to make specific choices, in line with the method. Ethnopoetics is not a neutral way of transcription and it can very well be argued that an ethnopoetic transcript is not purely transcription, but rather the outcome of the analysis (cf. Blommaert 2006b; Blommaert & Slembrouck 2000): an ethnopoetic transcript is the result of an analysis rather than the starting point of it.

At first sight, an ethnopoetic transcript may look odd and artificial, due to the organization into lines, groups of lines (verses) and stanzas. This organization is the result of a third assumption underlying the methodology: *oral narratives are aesthetically and implicitly ordered by means of poetic patterning*. Ethnopoetics “helps us to see more of what is there. It can bring to light kinds of organization in oral discourse not hitherto recognized” (Hymes 1996: 182). An ethnopoetic analysis makes visible the implicit structure of the story. It is believed that this implicit structure depends on the cultural background of the narrator and on the linguistic and sociolinguistic resources s/he has at his/her disposal. The organization of narratives into lines, verses and stanzas in ways that go beyond syntactic structure is the result of narrative being formally poetry (Hymes 1996). It is this organization that gives the narrative a characteristic flow that can be shown by means of an ethnopoetic transcript. In the ethnopoetic transformation of the narrative, the artistic qualities of the narrator as well as the potential for creativity receive attention due to the attention for the poetic rather than prosaic organization of the narrative. Ethnopoetics is a form of *practical* structuralism: it does not construct an unnecessarily complex way of speaking, but it reflects implicit – and complex, so you will – ways wherein people use to speak. According to Virginia Hymes, ethnopoetics is directed at “*making salient* the narrator’s use of devices at the level of phonology, syntax and lexicon” (Hymes, V. 1987: 67, original emphasis). When these devices are made apparent on the page this provides a heuristic device for “the analyst’s insight into the structure and meaning of the narrative in that particular performance” (Id.: 67), and it makes “those insights and the artistry of the narrator most available to readers” (Id.: 67). The knowledge and skills are part of the experience of the ethnographer wherein the voice of the ethnographer is reflected, but the narrative itself determines its concrete shape.

In §4.2.3 I concretely demonstrate ethnopoetics by means of providing an analysis of Danijela’s story. Before I start doing so I want to spend a few words on the usage-based concept of entrenchment since here we find an example of narrative as learning mode.

#### **§4.2.2. Entrenchment via stories**

The story I am about to analyze was told during the daily returning class activity *Woordenschat* ('Vocabulary'). This activity was explicitly aimed at increasing the children's Dutch vocabulary by means of weekly or two-weekly varying themes that were selected by Miss Potter according to a schedule. For each theme words related to this theme were selected and the children had to learn these words. During *Woordenschat* the class was divided in two groups, which separately attended the *Woordenschat* lessons: one group consisted of children who were in the first half of their year in the transition class, and the other group contained children who were more than six months in the class. The words the pupils had to learn were words on two levels and when a pupil was in the class for 1 year, s/he would have learned all the words belonging to a particular theme since each theme was scheduled twice during the year. Miss Potter used a variety of methods to teach the words and their meanings to the pupils. When the theme was, for instance, traffic, the children went outside, together with their teacher, to concretely see the meaning of the words they had to learn. The methods were always partly playful: at the end of *Woordenschat*, the pupils and Miss Potter always played at least one game with the words. Furthermore pictures were shown to the pupils and the pupils were encouraged to tell a story about the words they had to learn. This means that the teacher selected the topic: within the theme 'traffic', when the children had to learn the word 'pedestrian crossing', they would typically be allowed to tell a story about that word. Since quite a few words had to be learned, the stories had to remain short. The length of the story as well as the topic was limited by the teacher. Here narrative is consciously used with a pedagogical purpose: to expand the children's vocabulary, the children were encouraged to tell stories. This had at least two advantages. First, the pupils paid conscious attention to the meaning of the word, and second, the story functioned as a steppingstone: the word's meaning was made concrete. This use of stories for learning words suits the notion of entrenchment.

Entrenchment is a fundamental concept in usage-based linguistics (see Langacker 1991; Taylor 2002; Croft 2007). The idea is that when a 'unit' is frequently encountered or when a unit is salient, this unit gets entrenched in our linguistic knowledge (Taylor 2002). 'Unit' is a concept that is typically used in cognitive linguistics to refer to form-meaning pairs. It is believed that all of linguistic knowledge (i.e. lexicon, pragmatics, syntax, morphology, etc.) takes the shape of these form-meaning pairs (Id.), wherein a (phonological) element is connected to a semantic element by means of a symbolic relationship, meaning that the phonological element has a referent in – either abstract or concrete - reality. 'Units' can be words as well as larger chunks of language such as expressions, phrases and co-occurring words. Three kinds of units are distinguished: specific units; partially schematic units; and schematic units. These kinds of units represent a continuum ranging from concrete to abstract units. Specific units are stored as concrete expressions. Bound morphemes; words as traditionally understood; and fixed expressions (such as 'How are you?') are examples of specific

units: these are stored as a whole and as a result they can be processed and produced without any effort. Partially schematic units contain both obligatory, fixed slots and open slots: a unit is inserted in a larger unit. Partially schematic units are less concrete than specific units: there are open slots that need to be filled in in order to give these units a meaning. Schematic units are a representation of a common pattern observed in language, most obviously grammar. Schematic units are highly abstract; they only contain open slots that need to be filled in accordance with certain rules or norms. I would want to argue that 'genre' can also be understood as a schematic unit: there are open slots that need to be filled *in a particular way* in order to fulfill generic demands and to make the genre recognizable as such. We have a scheme in our mind of what a particular genre has to consist of, that is, which slots are necessary.

Apart from frequency, another mechanism that seems to determine entrenchment is saliency. It seems fair to assume that "attending to something helps storing it in memory, and we attend to what strikes us as salient in a particular situation" (Blommaert & Backus 2011: 6). Considering frequency and saliency as entrenchment-determining factors results in a strong correlation between acquiring linguistic knowledge and experience. As we all live different lives, a unit can be highly entrenched in the linguistic knowledge of one speaker, but at the same time rarely entrenched in the linguistic knowledge of another speaker. Entrenchment is crucially a psycholinguistic process, but the notion of entrenchment allows for explaining linguistic knowledge by taking into account cognitive as well as social factors, due to the focus on the role experience (i.e. frequently encountering a unit, and taking a unit as salient) plays in acquiring linguistic knowledge.

The assumption that when a unit is frequently encountered, it gets entrenched, establishes a connection between cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics or linguistic anthropology due to the link between experience, which is essentially social, and knowledge, allowing for studying the cognitive aspects of language use. This results in a usage-based view on language, implying that all aspects of usage and all aspects of language are of equal importance in our linguistic knowledge: there is no division into syntax, morphology, pragmatics and lexicon (Croft, 2007). Exceeding the boundaries of cognitive linguistics on the one hand and sociolinguistics or linguistic anthropology on the other hand would be valuable, since, as Croft (2007) has pointed out, the foundations of cognitive linguistics are valid, but too solipsistic: cognitive linguistics is in danger by "construing itself too narrow as an approach to language" (p. 1). If language were merely a cognitive ability, there would be no need to speak: mental representations of meaning would be enough. Instead, language emerges in producing and processing utterances. By consequence, there must be a characteristic of great importance that is not accounted for in cognitive linguistics, being the social-interactive aspects of language. At the same time, language cannot be only a social phenomenon, since it is evident that complex cognitive processes are involved in processing language. Cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics share a promising link in assuming that language knowledge is *usage-based*: linguistic knowledge, meaning the representation

of language in the brain, is constantly changing due to (social) experiences. This makes language acquisition a bottom-up process. Since people are exposed to different experiences, linguistic knowledge varies from person to person, leading to the conclusion that linguistic knowledge is highly individual since it is the result of our individual and unique life trajectories. A usage-based approach to language allows for an explanation of the way language is represented in the brain that also accounts for social factors. It is in this line of argument that a usage-based approach to language provides opportunities for studying individual, actual language use in social contexts without ignoring the cognitive aspects of our language use.

Blommaert and Backus (2011) form a welcome exception in the division between cognitive linguists and sociolinguistics by discussing their understanding of repertoire from a linguistic anthropological as well as from a cognitive linguistic perspective. As we saw in §3.3, the makeup of linguistic repertoires differs from person to person, since repertoires always carry traces of one's biography. As Duranti puts it: "[t]he choices available to speakers are a repertoire acquired through life experiences and subject to change through the life cycle, and partly due to one's social network, including the effects of schooling, profession, and a person's special interests." (2009: 23). This understanding of linguistic knowledge as a repertoire suits the usage-based notion of entrenchment: a repertoire is assumed to be individual and based on the experiences one has during his/her life span, which overlaps with the notion of entrenchment. It is this understanding of the role of entrenchment that leads to a view on linguistic knowledge that cognitive linguists and interactional sociolinguists/linguistic anthropologists can share. Cognitive linguists have assumed that language knowledge is a "structured inventory of entrenched units" (Langacker, 1991: 263). This may seem a definition that only allows for cognitive aspects of linguistic knowledge. However, in defining linguistic knowledge as a structured inventory of entrenched units, there certainly is space for the social dimension – hence the focus on social experience in the conceptualization of entrenchment. As a result this definition also reflects an approach to language that represents cognitive as well as social effects: in Langacker's definition, linguistic knowledge is located in the brain; and it is *entrenched* on the basis of a person's (social) experiences.

In sum, entrenchment occurs when a unit is salient or when it is encountered frequently, meaning that entrenchment is a diachronic effect of frequency. The major role of frequency in linguistic knowledge is due to the fact that our brain is equipped to recognize patterns in order to store what recurs as the assumedly normal pattern (Tomasello 2008). When the children in Miss Potter's transition class told stories about the words they had to learn, it is likely that the words were frequently used in their stories, which then is likely to result in easier entrenchment. At the same time, the stories evolve around a topic, being the word the children have to learn. This word is likely to be salient in the children's stories since the children have to attend to this word. As Blommaert and Backus (2011) mention: "attending to something helps storing it in memory" (p. 6), and attending to a word is what we do when we tell a story about it.

Asking the children to tell stories about the words the pupils have to learn thus is a method that is very likely to be effective.

#### ***§4.2.3. Danijela's story***

Let me now turn to a demonstration of ethnopoetics. I want to illustrate this demonstration with Danijela's story as told during *Woordenschat* ('Vocabulary'), about the time she almost got her swimming certificate. In the first phase of making an ethnopoetic analysis the story is selected. During the data collection I had bookmarked over 120 fragments as 'interesting' or 'relevant' for a variety of reasons and in my field notes I had written down why I had bookmarked those particular fragments. I decided that I wanted to analyze two fragments ethnopoetically, each recorded during another scheduled instance of sharing time in the transition class. A first and essential practical feature of the story that I was going to analyze was that I had to be able to understand what was said: the quality of the recording should be good enough, with not too much background noise from other children or other classes. Then, in first instance I looked for stories that were longer than others and that I believed were poetic on first sight. For one of the instances of sharing time named *Woordenschat* ('Vocabulary'), I could not find a story that I thought was long and 'poetic' enough. Ultimately I decided just to get started with the first story I had transcribed that day although I was not sure that I would be able to make a proper ethnopoetic analysis of that particular story. To my surprise it ended up to be perfectly possible to come up with an analysis of that particular story as told by Danijela.

Danijela was 11 years old and from Macedonia. In Macedonia she had been to school since she was 6 years old. Danijela had a Dutch stepmother and at home Dutch as well as Macedonian were spoken. At the time of the recording she was in the transition class for almost five months. Her migration, together with her father, one sister and two brothers, had taken place 8 months ago at the time of the fieldwork. In Danijela's story her migration, which must have been an impressive, if not devastating, experience for her, is a central element.

The second phase of an ethnopoetic analysis comprises the creation of a prose transcription of the story. In my demonstration of ethnopoetics I will not use Danijela's whole story, but only the major part of it, which is line 2-10 in the ethnopoetic transcript in Example 16. The prose transcript already takes into account overlapping speech, pauses and stress. Note that the teacher lines are not numbered. The prose transcription of this major part of Danijela's story is as follows (translation of the final ethnopoetic transcript is to be found in the appendices):

*Example 12: Prose transcription of major part of Danijela's story*

01. Danijela: ja ik was bijna, in Macedonie, ik moet ehh (.) nog [paar dagen.]  
Miss Potter: [ehh Isabella,  
Bartek moet het even zelf doen]
02. Danijela: ik moet nog paar dagen en Die, ja, ik wel goed ehh (.) zwemmen
03. maar ik moet nog paar dagen (.) Die ehh meester (.) zien, maar ik
04. kom naar Nederland (.)

In the third phase the story is divided into lines, verses, stanzas and, in more elaborate stories, scenes and acts. Lines are the smallest narrative unit. One line can only have one communicative function and is usually one intonation unit. Lines are often equivalent to phrases. One or more lines combine into verses that have sentence-like contours. A verse is “typically a line identified as a main proposition (and marked by a line-initial narrative marker such as ‘and’), potentially complemented by dependent, subordinate lines” (Blommaert 2006b: 273). On their turn, verses are organized in stanzas that share the same perspective on participants and action. A new stanza introduces a new topic. In extended narratives stanzas subsequently combine into scenes, “in which part of the narrated event is developed (Id. 273) and whose endpoints are signaled by major changes on the semantic level. Scenes are organized in acts. According to Virginia Hymes (1987), new units (verses, stanzas, scenes and acts) are signaled by linguistic devices and these devices result in cohesion within a unit. Consequently, the identification of units should be based on consistence in “use of particles or other features such as evidentials to mark off verses and stanzas or even larger segments” (Hymes, V. 1987: 69). First the lines should be distinguished. The analyst “can often just hear the lines fall out” (Hymes, V. 68). In Danijela's story, the division into lines looks as follows:

*Example 13: Lines in Danijela's story*

01. Danijela: ja ik was bijna  
02. in Macedonie  
03. ik moet ehh (.) nog [paar dagen]  
Miss Potter: [ehh Isabella, Bartek moet het even zelf doen]
04. Danijela: ik moet nog paar dagen  
05. en Die (.)  
06. ja ik wel goed ehh (.) zwemmen  
07. maar ik moet nog paar dagen (.) Die ehh meester zien  
08. maar ik kom naar Nederland (.)

Subsequently, groups of lines as organized into verses should be identified. Verses should be indented and clustered to indicate the relations between lines by showing which lines are subordinate to others (Blommaert 2006b: 273). When it comes to the identification of verses and larger units, the principle Jakobson (1960) has called equivalence is important. His description of this principle finds its place within the broader question of poetics: ‘What makes a verbal message a work of art?’ (Id.: 350). The answer to this question is embedded in the idea that language is a system of interconnected sub-codes that fulfill different functions<sup>3</sup>. For my purpose, the most important function is the function that attracts the attention to the message: the poetic function. To be clear: this function is not uniquely present in poetry. According to Jakobson, “*the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination*” (Id.: 358, original emphasis). In the case of narrative, this means that the speaker decides on the form of each unit of the story based on the combination with surrounding elements, resulting in a choice for elements that are equivalent in some way. Equivalence may involve *any* aspect of language: syntactic pattern; word structure; pitch; intonation; initial particles; other discourse markers; alliteration; and so forth. With Jakobson: “not only the phonological sequence but in the same way any sequence of semantic units strives to build an equation” (Id.: 371). Any conspicuous equation should be evaluated in terms of similarity or dissimilarity in meaning. Paying attention to equivalence thus is a way to establish the poetic function of language and to pertain to the implicit organization of a narrative. In daily speech “rhyme, rhythm, metaphors, repetitions, and figurative associations appear repeatedly and serve similar purposes as those to which are applied in formal elaborate poetry” (Poveda 2002: 275). The principle of equivalence is guiding in the examination of the way form underscores content as well as in the determination of narrative units. During the identification of verses and larger units, based on parallelism, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and/or repetition – i.e. equivalence “at the morphological, syntactic and lexical levels as well as at the level of the verse and stanza organization of the narrative” (Hymes, V. 1987: 70), the analyst continually steps

back (or up) and looks down from above at the organization of content of the whole narrative as it relates to these small units. The successive stages of the analysis are achieved by a moving back and forth between working down from whole to part. (p. 70)

This need to move back and forth is the result of the usually complex and layered organization of a narrative: the division into lines is based on more than one linguistic device and to identify lines and larger units, careful examination of different linguistic features is needed. In the ethnopoetic transcript, verses are marked by a, b, and c and stanzas are marked by roman numerals (based on Blommaert 2006b: 273). Danijela’s story contains one stanza and is therefore only divided in verses. This looks as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> Jakobson’s understanding of function does not fully overlap with Hymes’s understanding of the term. Jakobson regards function as a closed set, consisting of a taxonomy of six functions and combinations thereof, whereas for Hymes, the function of speech can never be taken for granted; should be established ethnographically; and, as a result, can be anything.



*Example 14: Verses in Danijela's story*

- |     |              |   |   |
|-----|--------------|---|---|
| 01. | Danijela:    | ja ik was bijna                                   | a |
| 02. |              | in Macedonie                                      | b |
| 03. |              | ik moet ehh nog [paar dagen]                      |   |
|     | Miss Potter: | [ehh Isabella, Bartek moet<br>het even zelf doen] |   |
| 04. | Danijela:    | ik moet nog paar dagen                            |   |
| 05. |              | en Die (.)  |   |
| 06. |              | ja ik wel goed ehh (.) zwemmen                    |   |
| 07. |              | maar ik moet nog paar dagen (.) Die ehh           |   |
| 08. |              | meester (.) zien.                                 |   |
| 09. |              | maar ik kom naar Nederland (.)                    | c |

In the fourth phase equivalent units and salient discourse markers are identified. Equivalent units “suggest themes and emphasis on part of the story, and contribute to the overall aesthetic organization of the narrative” (Id.: 273). Discourse markers are particles and connectives that “often identify lines and signal relations among lines” (Id.: 273) and that provide coherence. Hence this identification of discourse markers and equivalent units can result in a revision of the division into lines, verses and larger units as a consequence of the continuous need to go back and forth in working from whole to part. Salient discourse markers are printed in bold and equivalent units are signaled by underlining and further marked by arrows (based on Id.: 273).

*Example 15: Discourse markers and equivalence in Danijela's story*

- |     |              |   |     |
|-----|--------------|---|-----|
| 01. | Danijela:    | <b>ja</b> ik was <b>bijna</b>                         | a   |
| 02. |              | in Macedonie  | ⇐ b |
| 03. |              | <u>ik moet ehh (.) nog [paar dagen]</u>               | ⇐   |
|     | Miss Potter: | [ehh Isabella, Bartek moet<br>het even zelf doen]     |     |
| 04. | Danijela:    | <u>ik moet nog paar dagen</u>                         | ⇐   |
| 05. |              | <b>en</b> Die (.)                                     |     |
| 06. |              | <b>ja</b> ik wel goed ehh (.) zwemmen                 |     |
| 07. |              | <u><b>maar</b> ik moet nog paar dagen (.)</u> Die ehh |     |
| 08. |              | meester (.) zien.                                     |     |
| 09. |              | <b>maar</b> ik kom naar Nederland (.)                 | ⇐ c |

As I will show more elaborately in the analysis of Danijela's full story, she structured her story by using the markers 'ja' (yes), 'bijna' (almost), 'en' (and) and 'maar' (but). Another device to organize her narrative was the parallel use of 'ik moet nog paar dagen' in line 03 and line 06 and the juxtaposition between 'in Macedonie' at the beginning of verse b and 'naar Nederland' at the end of verse c.

In the fifth phase the profile of the story as well as the sequence of actions is determined. For elaborated stories, it is useful to also provide the sequence of verses, scenes and stanzas. In shorter stories like Danijela's story the verses may overlap with the actions. In such cases providing a separate sequence of actions in verses, scenes and stanzas is redundant. It makes sense to construct the profile of the story after the determination of the discourse markers, since the discourse markers influence the definite hierarchy of the stanzas, verses and lines. On the other hand there are also reasons for presenting the profile of the story and the sequence of actions *before* paying attention to the discourse markers since the discourse markers are only fully understandable within the larger structure of the narrative. There is no ideal solution for this so I now turn to the profile of the major part of Danijela's story after having paid attention to the discourse markers. For the short version of Danijela's story, this profile is as follows:

*Table 2: Profile of major part of Danijela's story*

Stanza	Verse	Lines
I	a	01
I	b	02-08
I	c	09

The sequence of actions in verses is:

- a. I almost had [a swimming certificate];
- b. I needed a few more lessons in Macedonia;
- c. I came to The Netherlands.

In the sixth phase we turn to the determination of the functions of narrative units in the broader frame of the story. I do not aim to provide a taxonomy of functions as I do not believe that each story contains the same units: elaborate stories will usually contain more units than shorter stories do, and the embedding of the story in the (institutional) environment also has its influence. Therefore I will only shortly mention a few examples of functions a narrative unit can have in a story. A verse can for instance function as *title*, as has been shown by Van der Aa (2012). A title is described by Van der

Aa (Id.) as a “maximally compressed story” (p. 78), which can be very elaborate and fully formed, consisting of protagonists, action and time. Another way of assigning functions to verses is by means of the pattern *Onset – Ongoing – Outcome*, a pattern often found by Hymes (1981a). Also the higher units Labov (1967 as cited in De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012) has identified are useful in determining the function of verses in the narrative. According to Labov, the *abstract* summarizes what the story is about by means of providing an introduction or by means of taking the floor. This abstract can, but does not always, overlap with Van der Aa’s title: I consider Labov’s abstract as possibly longer than Van der Aa’s title. Labov’s *orientation* “orients the listener in respect to person, place, time, and behavioral situation” (Id.: 28). Much of the orientation can be included in the *complicating action*; an element in the story that answers the question ‘What happened?’ in the narrative and that represents the basic events of the story. The *resolution* is the outcome of the narrative and it represents the solution to the complicated action. The *coda* is a bridge between the story world and the present by paying attention to the effect of the narrated events on the present by, for instance, offering a moral lesson. The *evaluation* answers the question ‘So what?’ and consequently pays attention to the story’s relevance and significance.

For a complete analysis of the story I turn to an ethnopoetic transcript of Danijela’s whole story, as embedded in the institutional environment of the transition class. A translation of the full ethnopoetic transcription is to be found in the appendices.

*Example 16: Ethnopoetic transcription of Danijela’s story, January 2012.*

- |               |  |                        |     |
|---------------|--|------------------------|-----|
| Miss Potter:  | hier zie je ZWEMMEN ((points to blackboard)) |                        |     |
|               | ZWEMMEN is ook e=s= een sport                |                        |     |
|               | sommige kinderen krijgen op school ZWEMMEN   |                        |     |
| Anah:         | ja ik  |                        |     |
| Miss Potter   | ja, heb jij op school geZwommen?             |                        |     |
| Anah:         | ja in ehh die andere s=                      | [op die andere school] |     |
| Miss Potter:  |  | [op de andere school]  |     |
| Miss Potter:  | oké  |                        |     |
|               | wie heeft bij ZWEMMEN al een Diploma?        |                        |     |
|               | wie kan al goed ZWEMMEN?                     |                        |     |
| Melissa:      | ((raises hand))                              |                        |     |
| 01. Danijela: | ja ik heb <b>bijna</b>                       | [xxx]                  | ⇐ a |
| Miss Potter:  |  | [Melissa]              |     |
| Melissa:      | maar ik bijna                                |                        |     |
|               | maar ik kan xxx in dat (.)                   |                        |     |
|               | dat kan ik ehh (0.5) zo goed zwemmen         |                        |     |
|               | en xxx                                       |                        |     |
| Miss Potter:  | maar jij bent wel gaan zwemmen dit weekend   |                        |     |
| Melissa:      | ja ik zwem                                   |                        |     |

- maar niet ehh ehh (1.0)
- Miss Potter: kan jij dan nog staan?
- Melissa: ja
- Miss Potter: ja
- niet in het diepe
- Melissa: ja
- Miss Potter: oké
- en Danijela?
02. Danijela: **ja** ik was **bijna** ⇐
03. in Macedonie ⇐ b
04. ik moet ehh (.) nog [paar dagen] ⇐
- Miss Potter: [ehh Isabella, Bartek moet  
het even zelf doen]
05. Danijela: ik moet nog paar dagen
06. **en** Die (.)
07. **ja** ik wel goed ehh (.) zwemmen
08. **maar** ik moet nog paar dagen (.) Die ehh ⇐
09. meester (.) zien.
10. **maar** ik kom naar Nederland (.) ⇐ c
- Miss Potter: o dus je hebt het NET niet = afgemaakt
11. Danijela: = ja
- Miss Potter: oké

The profile of the whole story, a profile of the type Onset-Ongoing-Outcome (Hymes 1981a), is as follows:

*Table 3: Profile of Danijela's story*

Stanza	Verse	Lines
I	a	01-02
I	b	03-09
I	c	10-11

The sequence of the actions in verses is the same as for the shorter version, so I do not include this again. Danijela's story was told with limited resources and as a result it was not told in accordance with the Dutch grammatical rules. On a poetic level however, the story was clearly layered and structured although Danijela used a limited amount of discourse markers. The story was structured with the markers 'ja' (yes), 'bijna' (almost), 'en' (and) and 'maar' (but). The reason for considering 'ja' (line 01, 02 and 07) as discourse marker and not as answer is because in 07 Danijela does not use it for answering a question, but in line with 'en' (line 06) and 'maar' (line 08) as discourse marker.

Danijela structured her story with the parallel use of '*ja ik [verb] bijna*' (yes I [verb] almost) in line 01 and 02. At the beginning of her story (line 01), she was interrupted by Miss Potter, who gave the floor to Melissa as Melissa had raised her hand whereas Danijela hadn't. When Danijela was allowed to tell her story, she once more used the same construction to open her story. The verse wherein she does so, verse a, is the title of her story. The elaborate title of her story would have been 'I almost had a swimming certificate'. The topic, swimming/a swimming certificate was firmly determined and announced by Miss Potter, as part of the *Woordenschat* lesson evolving around the theme 'Sports'. Danijela did not determine that the 'almost' referred to a swimming certificate but this becomes clear in the remainder of a story. The repetition of '*ja ik [verb] bijna*' in line 01 and 02 seems to help her to return to the topic and the story's structure. She does the same in line 04 and 05 ('*ik moet nog paar dagen*', - I have to few more days) when Miss Potter interrupts Danijela to admonish Isabella to be quiet. These repetitions help Danijela in refinding the line of her story.

After this interruption, verse b elaborates on Danijela's experiences with her swimming lessons in Macedonia. Verse b functions as orientation (Labov as cited in De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012): person, place, time and action are determined. By means of Danijela's determination 'in Macedonie' (in Macedonia) in line 03 it becomes clear that this part of the story takes place in Macedonia. In line 04, Danijela refers to her teacher, who had taught her how to swim and who believed that she was a good swimmer ('*ja ik wel goed ehh (.) zwemmen*' – yes I really swim ehh (.) well, line 07). She had had to see her teacher only a few more days (line 08-09) to receive her swimming certificate. This is the end of verse b. The story as told in verse b was situated in Macedonia, in verse c the location of the story suddenly changes to The Netherlands ('*maar ik kom naar Nederland*' - but I come to The Netherlands, line 10), which seems to be in line with Danijela's experience: she was living in Macedonia, she was taking swimming lessons and she almost had a swimming certificate and then she had to migrate to the Netherlands. This makes her story a story of sudden migration, which must have been a terrifying experience to a 10 years old girl.

In verse c, the complicating action (Id.) – her migration to The Netherlands – is presented. Verse b and verse c are contrasted in place and form: verse b takes place in Macedonia and in verse c attention is paid to the migration to The Netherlands. The contrast is underlined with the juxtaposition in line 03 and 10:

- 03.    in Macedonie
- 10.    **maar** ik kom naar Nederland

Verse b, line 03 starts with 'in Macedonie' (in Macedonia) and verse c, line 10 ends with 'naar Nederland' (to The Netherlands). In this juxtaposition form underscores content. Suddenly Danijela's story was cut off by Miss Potter, who summarized the story. In this summary the contrast as sketched by Danijela was emphasized in Miss Potter's recapitulation of Danijela's story: '*o dus je hebt het NET niet afgemaakt*' (o so you JUST

did not finish it). Here Danijela's story about her swimming certificate *in the light of her migration experience* is reduced to '*NET niet*' (JUST not), a reduction in both (formal) complexity and emotional impact. There were sound practical reasons for cutting off Danijela's story: there was a list of words the children had to learn during *Woordenschat* and the telling of stories during *Woordenschat* was only a vehicle for expanding the pupils' vocabulary. Nevertheless, this reduction of Danijela's layered and well-structured story in terms of both content and form showed that the generic implications of the narrative genre – i.e. relatively long turns – were not taken into account during Danijela's story as told during *Woordenschat*. This meant that Danijela's voice, the voice of an immigrant child who was confronted with a sudden migration, was not heard by the audience, meaning that Danijela was not able to accomplish voice. By consequence, the third function of sharing time, the opportunity to accomplish voice in narrative discourse, was not fulfilled. This story of Danijela is an example of the fulfillment of the second function of sharing time: in her story Danijela makes a connection between her life at school and her life at home. Interestingly, the life at home she mostly referred to was the life she had when she was living in Macedonia.

In the next section I provide an ethnopoetic analysis of Anah's story as recorded during another instance of sharing time in the transition class.

### **§4.3. Analyzing and bringing back Anah's story**

#### **§4.3.1. Anah's story**

In the transition class two weekly returning instances of sharing time were scheduled. Apart from *Woordenschat*, the children were encouraged to tell stories during the class activity *Vertellen* ('Telling'). Once a week, either on Monday or on Friday, the teacher asked the children to put their chairs in a circle in front of the class, boys and girls alternated. In that position the children were allowed to tell a narrative to the other children and to Miss Potter about a personal experience in the recent past or near future: they could tell a story about last weekend if the activity happened to be on Monday, and they could narrate about their plans for the next weekend if *Vertellen* was scheduled on Friday. During *Vertellen*, it seemed – at first sight – that the children had more freedom in topic selection than during *Woordenschat*. The teacher nevertheless still limited the options. Next to the topic restriction there was a genre the stories have to be told in. In §3.5.1 I already showed that the stories the children wanted to tell had to fit within an interview format, whereby questions were guiding. I showed that this format has a two-sided consequence: on the one hand the interview-genre results in accessibility due to Miss Potter attempts to shape the genre along the lines of the pupils' linguistic repertoires. On the other hand, however, the interview-genre also appeared to restrict the pupils' possibilities to express individuality and to accomplish voice since

the children had to structure their stories in accordance with the questions of the audience.

When *Vertellen* is announced and the pupils' chairs were put in a circle, Miss Potter explicitly mentioned the generic demands and the topic restriction as can be seen below (a translation is to be found in the appendices):

*Example 17: Miss Potter introduces format, January 2012.*

01. Miss Potter: Je mag dadelijk iets vertellen over het weekend. En je gaat één
02. ding kiezen. Wat het leukste is. Dus niet ik heb gegeten, ik ben
03. gaan slapen, ik ben gaan computeren, ik ben gaan buiten spelen,
04. ik ben gaan dit, u-huh-huh en dat was het. Nee, je gaat één ding
05. vertellen wat het leukste was van jouw weekend. Eén dus je
06. moet kiezen. En daar ga je wat over vertellen. Bijvoorbeeld als
07. het leukste is dat jij hebt gecomputeerd ga je vertellen
08. bijvoorbeeld welk spelletje met wie, wanneer, dan ga je daar iets
09. over vertellen. Als je een vraag hebt steek je je vinger naar voren
10. ((demonstrates)). Dat is een vraag. Een vinger in de lucht
11. betekent dat je wil vertellen ((demonstrates)). Als iemand aan
12. het vertellen is – je luistert niet mee Said - dan doe je je vinger
13. omlaag, want dan kan er toch niemand aan de beurt komen.

The children were instructed to tell something about the weekend. They had to select one 'thing', being the activity they enjoyed the most during the weekend. As we will see, the restriction to tell one 'thing' was inconveniently formulated. In her explanation Miss Potter demonstrated two ways to raise a finger: when the pupils wanted to ask a question, they had to put a finger forward; when they wanted to tell their story, they had to put a finger in the air. During the activity, all children were encouraged to tell a story. When a child did not raise a finger, Miss Potter would usually ask them what s/he had done last weekend. However, the majority of the children offered to tell a story by themselves: *Vertellen* was a popular class activity that the pupils looked forward to.

One of the children who offered to tell a story is Anah. Anah was eleven years old and from Iraq. At the time of the recording he was in the transition class for three weeks, which was relatively short. Anah and his father, mother and brother had migrated to The Netherlands nine months ago. When they arrived Anah at first was sent to a regular class but his command of Dutch was found not to be enough to be able to participate in this regular class. As a result he was sent to Miss Potter's transition class at Mayflower Primary School. At Anah's home Arabic and little Dutch were spoken.

*Example 18: Ethnopoetic transcription of Anah's story, January 2012.*

- Miss Potter: oké  
jij wou iets vertellen Anah
- Anah: ja
- Miss Potter: ja  
wat heb jij gedaan?
01. Anah: ik was gister (.) ehh met die nichtje (.) paardrijden I a  
Miss Potter: ZO  
spannend!
02. Anah: ja ik was eerst heel bang ⇐ b  
Miss Potter: ja
03. Anah: en ik ik ik ik ik was heel bank ⇐  
04. en daarna (.)  
05. dan ga ik gewoon zo vallen ⇐  
06. en en en alle jongens en meisjes gaan naar  
07. naar mij ehh lachen
- Miss Potter: O ((surprised))
08. Anah: ja (.) het is zo'n gr:o::te paard ((demonstration))  
Miss Potter: [ja]  
Class: [((laughter))]
09. Anah: en dan gewoon ga je (.)  
10. ga je vallen ⇐  
Miss Potter: was dat de eerste keer [dat jij] op een paard zat?
11. Anah: [ja] c  
12. met mijn nichtje  
13. mijn nichtje zit daar wel op  
14. ehh paardrijden **of zo**
- Miss Potter: [oké]
15. Anah: [ja]  
Miss Potter: leuk
16. Anah: ja
17. [en ik had] ⇐ II a  
Miss Potter: [en ik zie een paar vragen] voor je  
of wou je nog iets erbij vertellen?
18. Anah: ja
19. en dan ehh (.) was ik naar ehh huis ehh teruggegaan ⇐  
20. dan heb ik ehh (.) één film gezien (.) 3D ⇐  
Miss Potter: ((whispers)) één ding  
Over het paardrijden

This story comprises one scene, divided into two stanzas and four verses. The story's profile is as follows:



Table 4: Profile of Anah's story

Stanza	Verse	Lines
I	a	01
I	b	02-10
I	c	11-17
II	a	18-20

The story was structured with the discourse markers 'en' (and), 'daarna' (afterward), and 'dan' (then). Similar to Danijela's story, Anah's story was told with limited resources and as a result it was not told in accordance with the Dutch grammatical and lexical (line 03 'heel bank' instead of 'heel bang') rules. Nevertheless the story contained a poetic structure that was deployed with the use of only three discourse markers. The topic of the story is an exciting afternoon Anah had experienced last weekend. The sequence of actions is:

- I went horse riding with my cousin
- I was very afraid but then I fell and all the boys and girls started laughing
- I went home and saw a movie in 3D

Just like Danijela's story, Anah's story consists of 1 stanza, but the sequence of actions and the sequence of verses do not overlap since verse c, stanza 1 provides additional contextual information about Anah's cousin's experience with horse riding. Consequently the sequence of verses is:

#### *Stanza I*

- a) I went horse riding with my cousin
- b) I was very afraid but then I fell and all the boys and girls started laughing
- c) My cousin has experience with horse riding

#### *Stanza II*

- a) I went home and saw a movie in 3D

In the first stanza of his story, Anah tells about his thrilling experience of horse riding with his cousin. Here the second function of sharing time is visible: the connection between life at school and life at home is made. In doing so, the first verse functions as an orientation toward the topic of this stanza: in line 01 time ('*gister*': yesterday); protagonists ('*ik*': I and '*die nichtje*': that cousin) and activity ('*paardrijden*': horse riding) are mentioned, which orients the audience to the context of the activity. In verse b Anah presents the complicating action (Labov 1967 as cited in De Fina & Georgakopoulou): at first he was very afraid, but then he fell and the other boys and girls started laughing. The third verse (c) is directed at answering Miss Potter's question about his experience

with horse riding: *'was dat de eerste keer dat jij op een paard zat?'* (was that the first time you were on a horse?). Anah answers the question (*'ja'* - yes, line 11) and also provides some information about his cousin's experience with horses: *'mijn nichtje zit daar wel op ehh paardrijden of zo'* (my cousin is 'on ehh horse riding' or so, line 13 and 14). The next stanza is essentially part of the story since it fits within the broader frame of telling a story about the spectacular afternoon Anah had had the day before. After the horse riding he went home and he saw a movie, a 3D movie: *'en dan ehh was ik naar ehh huis ehh teruggegaan dan heb ik ehh één film gezien 3D'* - and then ehh I went ehh back ehh home then I saw ehh one movie 3D, line 19 and 20. This is an orientation to another part of Anah's afternoon: again person, place, time and behavioral situation (Id.) are made clear. At this point Miss Potter cut off the story and in her recapitulation of the story she reduced the story to *'over het paardrijden'*: on the horse riding.

In response to line 01 Miss Potter validated Anah's orientation to the topic with a *'ZO'* (SO) that was louder than the environment and she intensified this validation with *'spannend'* (exciting), whereby she confirmed to Anah that a story about such an exciting topic is worth telling. Anah responds with saying that he was at first very afraid (line 02), which was again validated by Miss Potter by means of rhyme: Anah's *'ja ik was eerst heel bang'* (yes at first I was very afraid, line 03) is followed by Miss Potter's *'ja'* (yes). This is a demonstration of Anah's accomplishment of voice, which resulted in a breakthrough into performance (Hymes 1981a) in line 03-08. The breakthrough started with end rhyme: *'heel bang'* (very afraid) in line 02 was repeated by Anah with *'heel bank'* (very \*afraid). Between line 07 and line 08 Miss Potter again validated the interesting content of Anah's story with a surprised *'O'*. As a reaction Anah used two devices to support his story. First he stands up to demonstrate the size of the horse and second he uses a prolonged vowel in *'ja het is zo'n gr:o::te paard'* (yes it's this b:i::g horse, line 08). Subsequently Anah's accomplishment of voice was reinforced and acknowledged by his classmates, who were laughing about Anah's story. At the same time Miss Potter again rhymes with *'ja'* (yes): another confirmation of Anah's accomplishment of voice. In Anah's breakthrough into performance it becomes visible how Miss Potter's support of Anah's narrative flow resulted in an opportunity for Anah to produce meaning in his own particular way, a way that satisfied him and that led to appreciation from his classmates in the form of laughter.

As a result of this validation of his story as well as of his accomplishment of voice Anah repeated the bottom line of this verse: *'en dan gewoon ga je ga je vallen'* (and then just like that you will you will fall, line 09-10). This group of lines is an interrupted rhyme with line 05 in the form of a juxtaposition:

- 05.     **dan** ga ik gewoon zo vallen
- 09.     **en dan** gewoon ga je (.)
- 10.                     ga je vallen

From a personal and individual verse Anah went to an impersonal and generalized verse to underline the content of this verse. He did the same in his answer to Miss Potter's question about his previous experience with horse riding: '*was dat de eerste keer dat jij op een paard zat?*' (was that the first time you were on a horse?). Anah replies with a '*ja*' (yes) and his answer ends with a generalization '*of zo*' (or so, line 14) whereby he broadens the frame of the story: the story is no longer only about the narrow topic of horse riding. Anah's attempt to broaden the topic is supported by his parallel use of '*en*' (and, line 17), '*en dan*' (and then, line 19), and '*dan*' (then, line 20).

- 17.     [en] ik had]
- 19.     en dan ehh (.) was ik naar ehh huis ehh teruggegaan
- 20.         dan heb ik ehh (.) één film gezien (.) 3D

This set of discourse markers is comparable with the set Anah deployed in stanza I, verse b, lines 03-06. Here he starts elaborating on the horse riding and he marks this element with '*en*' (and, line 3), '*en daarna*' (and afterward, line 04), '*dan*' (then, line 05), '*en en en*' (and and and, line 06):

- 03.     en ik ik ik ik ik was heel bank
- 04.     en daarna (.)
- 05.     dan ga ik gewoon zo vallen
- 06.                 en en en alle jongens en meisjes gaan naar
- 07.                         naar mij ehh lachen

This set of discourse markers at the beginning of a line for Anah seems a way to start elaborating on the topic. In line 17-20 he wants to do so in order to move onto the second part of the story: stanza II. Yet another way to support this new turn of story is the amplification at the end of line 20: Anah did not see a regular movie; he saw a movie in 3D. The addition of 3D functions as reinforcement of the relevance of the stanza, comparable with the amplification in line 08: '*gr:o::te paard*' (b:i::g horse): it was not just a horse, but a big horse. These amplifications are added by Anah to increase the rhetorical effect and to clarify why his stories are worth listening. In that sense the amplification could be regarded as a Labovian evaluation: the amplifications pay attention to the story's relevance by implicitly answering the question 'So what?' (Labov 1967 as cited in De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012). In both cases, Anah underscored these amplifications by means of phonological features. In line 08 we see the prolonged vowel in '*gr:o::te paard*' (b:i::g horse) and in line 20 there is the short pause between '*één film gezien*' (saw one movie) and '3D'. Whereas in line 08 the amplification was picked up and supported by Miss Potter as well as by Anah's classmates, in line 20 Anah's story was cut off by Miss Potter although this first verse of the second stanza is the transition to another *part* of the story rather than to another story. It is *another stanza of the same story* that is clearly embedded in Anah's full story by means of the aforementioned procedures.

This means that Anah was neither consciously trying to sabotage the genre in order to wrong-foot Miss Potter (see Jaspers 2005) nor deliberately trying to achieve the opportunity to tell another story, although his attempt to continue his story was not in accordance with the rules as announced by Miss Potter before *Vertellen* started. Miss Potter had announced that the pupils were only allowed to tell about one 'thing' and for Anah 'one thing' was this afternoon, an afternoon during which he had experienced several exciting activities. For Anah, and possibly also for other pupils the concept 'thing' remained vague and therefore pedagogically inconvenient. Although Miss Potter had clearly supported Anah's accomplishment of voice in the second verse of the story (verse b, stanza I), in the second stanza the complexity in form, namely the introduction of a new stanza was reduced and so is the content of the story by means of recapitulating only the horse riding: 'over het paardrijden' (about the horse riding). Taken together, Anah had succeeded in accomplishing voice in Stanza I whereas he was not heard on his own terms in Stanza II. In Anah's story utilizing the third function of sharing time, the accomplishment of voice in narrative discourse, was again ambiguous.

#### ***§4.3.2. Bringing Anah's story back to Miss Potter***

The third step of ethnographic monitoring is to bring back the results to the stakeholders, in this case Miss Potter. With bringing back the findings I do not only mean presenting the findings to the stakeholders but, crucially, also discussing these with them. This results in an opportunity for teachers to provide feedback. Consequently this third step is not a mere fact-check but rather a chance to come to the collaborative creation of knowledge, that is, to a theory that is shared among the ethnographer and the people whom we work with.

As I briefly mentioned in §1.2, when the ethnographer starts with fieldwork on primary schools s/he can never be only an observer. Even if s/he decides to do absolutely nothing but observing, recording and making field notes, his/her presence changes something in the environment wherein the fieldwork is carried out, albeit only because the pupils notice the presence of ethnographer and they will in some way react to the presence of a person that was formerly unknown to them. Therefore a logical part of the research process is to take this position as participant seriously and, as a consequence, to provide opportunities to the people whom is worked with to have their voices heard. With this purpose in mind, after the fieldwork I organized a meeting with Miss Potter to show her some preliminary results. At that time I had just finished a preliminary analysis of the first part of Anah's story. I showed her the ethnopoetic analysis and I explained Anah's elaborate orientation in the beginning of the first stanza and how his accomplishment of voice was supported by means of validation of the relevance of the story (direct and explicit support), rhyme (indirect and implicit support), and the class's response with laughter. Miss Potter was interested in the

technique of ethnopoetics and her enthusiasm resulted in the following conversation (translation to be found in the appendices):

*Example 19: Miss Potter's reaction on the ethnopoetic analysis of Anah's story, April 2012.*

01. Kristel: Ik had het even op een blaadje geschreven, dat ik niet de hele tijd  
02. z=  
03. Miss Potter: =Grappig, daar ben je je helemaal niet bewust van als je gewoon  
04. = als je het zo vertelt denk je 'Ja', maar =  
05. Kristel: =Maar herken je het wel?  
06. Miss Potter: Ja, zeker, maar als gewoon iemand iets aan het vertellen is ben ik  
07. daar natuurlijk niet in mijn hoofd mee bezig van, goh, wat precies  
08. het effect is van wat ik zeg maar als je het zo dan ziet dan, ja! Nee,  
09. ik herken het wel maar, ja, ik vind het wel grappig, ik denk er  
10. nooit zo over na.  
11. Kristel: Nee.  
12. Miss Potter: Het gaat meer, ja, vanzelf.  
13. Kristel: Ja.  
14. Miss Potter: Leuk!

*Miss Potter tells about Anah's progress: it had been 2, 5 months since Anah's story was recorded and hearing the recording made her notice that Anah's command of Dutch had increased. Later on in the meeting, Miss Potter again took the lead in returning to the ethnopoetic analysis once more.*

15. Miss Potter: Ja, ik vind het wel heel grappig om zo te zien dat je je daar niet  
16. echt zo bewust van bent als je dan in de kring bezig bent zeg  
17. maar (.)  
18. Kristel: Nee en=  
19. Miss Potter: =Als je het zo op papier ziet denk je van 'Ja!'.

In this example it becomes clear that ethnopoetics indeed brings out “more of what is there” (Hymes 1996:182): the ethnopoetic organization of the narrative and its surrounding interaction on the paper increased Miss Potter's awareness on how she responded to the pupils' narratives as well as on how her response had an effect on the pupils and on the effectiveness of their stories.

First, seeing the ethnopoetic analysis made Miss Potter realize that her reaction on the pupils' stories has an effect that goes beyond the directly observable level. She expressed this in the following quotes:

- *'Ja, zeker, maar als gewoon iemand iets aan het vertellen is ben ik daar natuurlijk niet in mijn hoofd mee bezig van, goh, wat precies het effect is van wat ik zeg maar als je het zo ziet dan, ja!'* - Yes, certainly, but when someone is simply telling a story I am of course not occupied in my head with, well, what exactly is the effect of what I say, but when you see it like this, than, yes!, line 06-08;
- *'Als je het zo op papier ziet denk je van 'Ja!'* - When you see it on the paper you think like 'Yes!', line 19.

Miss Potter twice referred to the value of seeing the story in an ethnopoetic transcript on the paper. This apparently helped her to realize that she actually affects the pupils' stories also in ways that are not immediately recognizable. In §3.2 I paid attention to the ideology of phonemic immediacy I had expected when I started the fieldwork: in this language ideology, which is prevalent in the Dutch educational system, it is believed that command of language can be directly observed based on grammatical, lexical and phonological features that are believed to fully reflect children's proficiency in a certain language. Here we see that an ethnopoetic analysis directs Miss Potter to paying attention to another level and to underlying poetic structures.

Second, Miss Potter immediately recognized the ethnopoetic transcript. In line 02-03 we see how Miss Potter interrupted me while I was still looking on a paper for more arguments and more theory in order to explain the ethnopoetic analysis. In line 15 Miss Potter takes the lead to return to the ethnopoetic transcript. This was also found in earlier research (see Van der Aa 2012) and it is striking that an analysis that needs a heavy and dense academic introduction of more than 5 pages (in this thesis) results in instant recognition and positive surprise on behalf of the teacher.

The theoretical and methodological framework that resulted in an ethnopoetic analysis leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of unconscious behavior – in this case a 'good practice' – for Miss Potter. The articulation of formerly unconscious behavior as well as the re-articulation of good practices then turns into expertise, which can be reflected upon and shared with others. This is what ethnopoetics in the broader method of ethnographic monitoring can do: making explicit the knowledge that results in good practices and bringing this rearticulated knowledge back to the stakeholders.

Third, Miss Potter realized that she partly responds automatically to the pupils' stories, as becomes clear in the following lines:

- *'Grappig, daar ben je je helemaal niet bewust van'* - Funny, you are not at all consciously doing that, line 03;
- *'ik denk er nooit zo over na'* - I never think about it in that way, line 09-10;
- *'Het gaat meer, ja, vanzelf'* - It goes rather, yes, automatically, line 12;

- *'Ja, ik vind het wel heel grappig om zo te zien dat je je daar niet echt zo van bewust bent'* - Yes, I think it is very funny to see in this way that you are not really consciously doing that, line 15-16.

The effect of partially providing the ethnopoetic analysis of Anah's story to Miss Potter appears to be an increase of consciousness with regard to her automatic responses to the children's stories as well as with respect to the given that the effects of her reactions to the pupils' stories are not always directly observable.

Increasing consciousness may seem a small effect, but, after all, awareness is the first step to change. The goal of the third step of ethnographic monitoring is exactly that teachers attend to a presentation of the activities they carry out unconsciously since, in doing so, they become more conscious of what they do and of what the effects of their behavior are. In institutional environments where narratives have an influence on people's fate and where unclear stories are regarded as 'less good' stories, increasing consciousness about the existence of another layer of structure, namely poetic structure, and of implicit as well as explicit ways to support and understand these structures are important. When teachers are aware of their support on behalf of the pupils' poetic accomplishment of voice in narratives, they can start deploying this support more consciously. Support of pupils' stories by means of the teacher's attempt to grasp and acknowledge the pupils' implicit poetic patterning may result in more elaborate stories. I believe that, in Miss Potter's class, where the generic demands of the interview result in relatively short turns (see §3.5.1) this may result in the development of narrative skills for the pupils and, as a result, in an increase of opportunities to accomplish voice for the pupils. This accomplishment of voice is exactly what Miss Potter appeared to be concerned with (see §2.4.1). And it is this accomplishment of voice that results in satisfaction on behalf of the speaker and, as we saw in the class's laughter in response to Anah's breakthrough into performance, of the audience.

#### **§4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have paid attention to the third step of ethnographic monitoring. I have done so by providing two analyses of stories as told during the class activities *Woordenschat* (Danijela's story) and *Vertellen* (Anah's story). During *Woordenschat* narratives are consciously used as learning mode. The way narratives are used during *Woordenschat* ties in with the usage-based linguistic notion of entrenchment. Danijela and Anah both had to adhere to generic demands and the choices for a topic were restricted. Both narratives were cut off by Miss Potter for practical reasons and in doing so the stories were reduced in formal complexity and emotional impact. The ethnopoetic analysis of Anah's story was brought back to Miss Potter, which resulted in surprise, recognition and increased consciousness. It is this increased awareness that can open up the way to change and that is a prerequisite for utilizing the pedagogical

potential of narrative. After all, fully making use of narrative as learning mode is only possible when teachers are willing to consciously make use of procedures that support the children's accomplishment of voice.



## Chapter 5. Step 4: Taking stock

### *Toward a narrative pedagogy*

#### §5.1. Introduction

The final step of ethnographic monitoring is to take stock. This fourth step has not explicitly been described by Dell Hymes, but since ethnographic monitoring aims at democratic knowledge, this step is inevitable. By means of exploring who, in the end, gets what from the research, the ethnographer can do justice to the ideal of democratic knowledge and to the equal position of researcher and stakeholders (see Van der Aa & Blommaert 2011; Van der Aa 2012). It is in this chapter that I pay attention to the opportunity of ethnographic monitoring to work toward a theory.

Based on the foregoing chapters, this last chapter will provide a tentative narrative pedagogy that can be effectively applied in primary schools. This pedagogy is based upon narrative as learning mode and takes as starting point the practice in Miss Potter's transition class. In the ideal case (but out of the scope of this thesis), the narrative pedagogy would be brought back to Miss Potter and subsequently applied in Miss Potter's class. The ethnographer as long-term academic consultant (Peters and Van der Aa 2012) would then monitor the use of this pedagogy and then the process of ethnographic monitoring becomes a cycle rather than a linear process. I will pay attention to this statement in §5.3. The chapter finishes with concluding remarks.

Before I turn to the pedagogical potential of narrative, let me finish the introduction of this last chapter with a quote from Hymes (1996), whom has been a source of inspiration to me. If I deconstruct this quote, it hopefully becomes clear that it describes a perspective on research that can be fulfilled by using the combination of methods that I have tried to sketch in this thesis.

There lies ahead a vast work, work in which members of narrative communities can share, the work of discovering forms of implicit patterning in oral narratives, patterning largely out of awareness, *relations* grounded in a universal *potential*, whose *actual* realization varies. To demonstrate its presence can enhance respect for and appreciation of the voice of others. (p. 219, original emphasis)

- "*There lies ahead a vast work,*": research on actual language, on how people make themselves understood, on what people actually do and can do with the resources at their disposal, was needed 20 years ago, when Hymes published *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward an Understanding of Voice*, and it is still needed nowadays, as especially in a world characterized by superdiversity and mobility, the notion of voice has become a salient one;

- *“work in which members of narrative communities can share”*: I hope to have shown in the foregoing that the value of ethnographic monitoring is exactly this: to create space for the voice of the people whom we work with; and to listen to their stories through the implicit patterning of their stories;
- *“the work of discovering forms of implicit patterning in oral narratives, patterning largely out of awareness”*: during the research process within the approach that was sketched in this thesis, the aim is to listen to people’s stories; to recognize their narrative flow; and to acknowledge the implicit patterning of their stories as a layer of meaningful structure;
  - *“relations grounded in a universal potential, whose actual realization varies”*: the ways form underscores content should never be taken for granted, but rather investigated again and again since these cannot be assumed *a priori*. Here the emergent nature of narratives is represented;
- *To demonstrate its presence can enhance respect for and appreciation of the voice of others*: in ethnographic monitoring in education, the voice of all people involved is crucial: the voice of the teacher as key to epistemology; and the supported as well as the misrecognized voice of the pupils constitute a common thread throughout the research, resulting in the empowerment of voices that otherwise may have gone lost.

## **§5.2. An empirically-based narrative pedagogy: narrative as learning mode**

In Miss Potter’s transition class there appeared to be a need for usable teaching material (see §2.4.2). Narratives are already present in the educational discourse. Miss Potter is aware of the central position of narrative in the classroom – see § 2.4.1, example 4, wherein Miss Potter mentions the central position of narrative in the class and states that ‘a lot of things are telling’. During the fieldwork it appeared that the pedagogical potential of narrative was already utilized in Miss Potter’s transition class: in several ways narrative was applied as learning mode. Due to the need for teaching material and Miss Potter’s attitude toward narrative it was worth the effort to further explore this potential in order to see how the classes in Mayflower Primary School, and other classes in primary schools, can fully benefit from this potential. In the foregoing chapters I discussed the potential of narrative for pedagogical purposes in several paragraphs. Here I want to bring these opportunities together in order to show how the potential of narrative can be utilized in education.

### ***§5.2.1. Acquiring a ‘repertoire of competences’***

Blommaert (2008a) has argued that the focus should be on a *repertoire of competences* in order to go beyond knowledge of a language:

People appear to possess a much richer repertoire of competences, one that allows them to bypass the limitations of their purely linguistic competences, to add to them and to complement them. These are the competences we all enjoy and appreciate in everyday life: the competence to tell a good joke or to laugh when someone tells one, the competence to say kind words to someone in distress, to express our anger and anxiety whenever needed, to give others the feeling that they are cared about and listened to. It is the capacity to use language for fun, for pleasure and for effect – to impress, intimidate, or to mollify and give in. It is this complex of competences that makes people memorable: Nelson Mandela was a great orator, in spite of his heavy South African accent; Martin Luther King was an even greater one in spite of his Afro-American accent. And no one can remain unmoved when listening to speeches by Lumumba or Ghandi, even if both spoke with distinctly un-prestigious accents. (p. 448)

This view is suitable with functional learning. In §3.4.1 I briefly mentioned the focus on functional learning in the transition class, which for example resided in the given that the pupils’ spelling mistakes in written exercises usually would not result in lower grades. It is functional learning that allows for judging a “repertoire of competences” (Blommaert 2008a). And it is the result of a repertoire of competences instead of of full command of certain resources – for instance Standard Dutch – that we enjoy in communication.

This repertoire of competences is likely to be deployed in, for instance, the pupils’ narrative performances. Functional learning results in judging the pupils’ repertoires of competences as shown in their narrative performances *as a whole* instead of attributing a judgment to the pupils’ stories based on partial, separated and isolated literacy-related competences. Judging the pupils on isolated literacy-related competences instead of on the performance as a whole is likely to reinforce inequality since especially the means and the access to specific literacy-related competences are unequally divided over the world (see Blommaert 2008b). Assessing a repertoire of competences rather than unequally divided means such as literacy-related resources negotiates the influence of unequal division of resources, and of means and access to literacy.

I want to emphasize that I do not advocate an ‘anything goes’-attitude in schools. I do think that the superdiverse situation in Miss Potter’s transition class, resulting in inequality (see Chapter 3) brings about a delicate balance between on the one hand supporting the pupils in being able to adhere to the standard they have to adhere to after one year of education in a transition class on the one hand, and supporting the pupils’ struggle for voice as well as aiming at leveling out inequality on the other hand. This distinction was also mentioned by Miss Potter (see §1.1.3): she contrasted the children’s narratives with exercises that are explicitly targeted at improving the pupils’

Dutch language proficiency. During the exercises she would correct the children's mistakes, whereas in their narratives she hoped to hear them on their own terms, that is, support them to achieve voice.

### ***§5.2.2. Entrenchment via stories***

Another way of using narrative as learning mode is by making use of the phenomenon of entrenchment by means of encouraging pupils to consciously pay attention to the meaning of the word they have to learn. In Miss Potter's class this was done during *Woordenschat* ('Vocabulary'), an activity that was aimed at expanding the children's Dutch vocabulary (see §4.2.2). Among others methods the children were asked to tell stories about the words they had to learn. The narratives enable the children to consciously pay attention to the word and at the same time, the meaning of the word becomes concrete for the children, which allows them to use the story as steppingstone. The use of stories to make it easier for children to learn and remember words suits the notion of entrenchment: a concept that refers to the way a word, or a larger linguistic unit, gets 'entrenched' – that is, embedded – in our linguistic knowledge when we frequently encounter it, and when the word or larger unit strikes us as salient. So: a unit is stored in our linguistic knowledge when we are frequently confronted with it or when it stands out. Blommaert and Backus (2011) have assumed that "attending to something helps storing it in memory, and we attend to what strikes us as salient in a particular situation" (p. 6), which explains why salient units get entrenched. When pupils tell stories about concepts, they do two things: first, they consciously attend to it, and this attention makes the word salient to them. Second, they use the word in the stories they tell about the concept. Using stories to learn words accounts for the occurrence of saliency as well as of frequency, which both result in entrenchment of these words in the pupils' lexicon.

The topic of the narratives the children were allowed to tell during *Woordenschat* was restricted to the words the pupils had to learn that particular day. Since quite a few words had to be learnt, the length of the stories was also limited by the teacher and due to this practical reason the children's stories were often cut off by Miss Potter since the narratives the children told during *Woordenschat* were only a vehicle for paying attention to other knowledge and skills. As a result the pedagogical potential of narrative is not fully utilized during *Woordenschat* for the generic implications are not taken into account. Narrative is a genre that flourishes when long turns are allowed and there was no space for such long turns during *Woordenschat*. It could be stated that the pedagogical potential is underestimated during this lesson by using narrative only as vehicle for other knowledge and not as providing opportunities in its own right.

### §5.2.3. Generic implications & the acquisition of genre

As I said in §1.1.3, narrative is a micro- as well as a macro-genre: stories can be *part of another genre* such as an interview (narrative as micro-genre) and other genres, such as indirect discourse: a “‘quotation’ of a monologue or dialogue [which] creates the illusion of ‘pure’ mimesis” (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 111) can be *part of a narrative* (narrative as macro-genre). An often-used genre in Miss Potter’s transition class was the interview (see §3.5.1): the pupils’ narratives evolved along the lines of a question-answer pattern. Miss Potter usually asked questions and she encouraged the children to also ask ‘good’ questions, which the pupils were eager to do. The format of an interview has two advantages. First, the interview allows for the inclusion of several micro-genres such as narrative, questions, answers, feedback, suggestions and evaluative comments, as well as switches in genre: in an interview the ways genres are mixed and layered becomes very clear. Second, the way Miss Potter introduced and structured the interview enabled a low-profile way of telling stories for the children: Miss Potter was consciously searching for questions that children with limited command of Dutch could answer, which allows for the introduction of different levels for the production of meaning. When the children have just entered the class Miss Potter would typically try to ask questions the children can answer, for instance by asking questions the pupils can answer with only ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ (see §2.4.1 and §3.5.2). Also, an interview enables collaborative making of meaning: by asking questions, other children as well as Miss Potter can contribute to the story.

There are also disadvantages of the interview-genre. The questions of the audience (Miss Potter and classmates) determine the line of the story: a question can only be appropriately answered by means of a limited set of answers. This restricted the pupils’ opportunities to tell a story on their own terms, that is, to achieve voice. This effect was reinforced by the frequent repetition of questions. A story usually started with the following formulaic opening (see Lucine’s story in §3.5.1 and Anah’s story in §4.3.1):

*Example 20: Formulaic opening question.*

1. Miss Potter: [Name child] wat heb jij gedaan?  
[Name child] what did you do?
2. Pupil: [Time] heb ik [activity] met [person].  
[Time] I went [activity] with [person].

Typically, the pupils and Miss Potter would then ask questions such as ‘*Waar heb je dat gedaan?*’ (‘Where did you do that?’), ‘*Hoe laat heb je dat gedaan?*’ (‘At what time did you do that?’) and ‘*Was het de eerste keer dat je dat deed?*’ (‘Was it the first time you did

that?'). As a result the pupils' development of narrative skills was restricted to answering these formulaic questions on the one hand, and the asking of these formulaic questions by the audience on the other hand, which resulted in the pupils being well-trained in one set of questions and answers but not in another. Furthermore the generic implications of the interview and the generic implications of the narrative do clash in the sense that a narrative flourishes when long turns are allowed (see also §5.2.2) whereas in an interview the turns are usually shorter. This format also resulted in restricted possibilities for development of narrative skills and limited opportunities for the pupils to accomplish voice.

When it comes to the fully making use of the pedagogical potential of narrative a few interventions would be worth trying to see if it results in the development of a broader range of narrative skills on behalf of the pupils. First, Miss Potter could consider allowing longer terms sometimes. Of course the time is limited in educational institutions, but in Danijela's story (§4.2.3) as well as in Anah's story (§4.3.1) the narrative was cut off by Miss Potter and subsequently reduced in formal complexity and emotional impact, which suggests that the pupils are actually capable of telling more elaborate stories when they would get the chance. Second, Miss Potter could consider encouraging more variety in the pupils' questions as well as in her own questions, including the formulaic opening. I do think that this might result in more fully utilizing the pedagogical potential of narratives.

#### ***§5.2.4. Narrative and voice: Changing the way language is taken to mean & Awareness of patterning***

The potential of narratives to carry voice is another reason to consider narrative as learning mode: narratives enable pupils to show their own perspective, to express their individual realities and to do this in a way that is perceived as 'meaningful' when they succeed in accomplishing voice. In §2.4.1. I discussed Miss Potter's definition of narrating as 'wanting to get something off your mind', which shows that she views narrative as providing opportunities for expressing oneself. Miss Potter's almost analytical view on narrative seemed to tie in with considering the function of narrative in the classroom as allowing for making sense of the world, for shaping experiences and for hearing the pupil the pupils on their own terms.

It appeared that the actual accomplishment of voice in the children's stories was difficult. In several analyses of the children's stories (see §3.5.1; Chapter 4) an ambiguous picture of the accomplishment of voice arose (for a theoretical view on this ambiguity see §1.1.2). Although Miss Potter was flexible toward the use of other resources than Dutch and although she sometimes even encouraged the children to use all there is to use in their repertoires, the pupils in her transition class were usually faced with the difficult task to tell a story with limited resources. As I also put forward

in §3.5.1, Hymes (1980) has argued that achieving equality in language would not be possible by means of changing the way people speak, but by means of changing the way people speak is *taken to mean* (p. 110). When another layer of meaningful structure in the pupils' stories is acknowledged, the way the pupils' stories are taken to mean may change since this allows the teacher to more easily recognize the complex structure that underscores the form (see Chapter 4). This results in an increase of the chance that pupils are regarded as communicatively competent, among others based on poetic patterning. Decreasing inequality resides among others in the way the pupils' speech is taken up by Miss Potter, in the way the children's speech is perceived and supported. This is what awareness of poetic patterning can contribute to equality, and at the same time, to supporting the pupils' struggle for voice.

The combination of ethnographic monitoring and ethnopoetics can result in awareness when it comes to patterning and to the ways teachers can either support or misrecognize this patterning. Ethnopoetic transcripts appear to be easily recognizable for teachers, as was shown by Van der Aa (2012) and in §4.3.2 of this thesis. Increasing awareness opens up the way to change due to the opportunities it provides for teachers to support the pupils' poetic patterning more consciously. First, if this succeeds, the opportunities for the pupils to accomplish voice within their narratives increase. Accomplishing voice is "communicating in ways that satisfy personal, social, and cultural needs" (Blommaert 2008b: 17). Second, this satisfaction is likely to result in narrative development on behalf of the pupils. Third, the pupils' development of narrative skills may allow the children to tell more elaborate stories – which then again increases the chances that voice is accomplished. Eventually, it is then that the pedagogical potential for narratives to carry voice is utilized.

### **§5.3. Concluding remarks**

In the foregoing section I have tried to rearticulate some of the findings from the fieldwork as described in Chapter 1-4 into a pedagogy of narrative. In doing so I have aimed at exploring the notion of narrative as learning mode, based mainly on the analyses of the pupils' stories. I do think that this pedagogy can also effectively be applied in other classes, especially when the teacher of the other class holds ideas about narrative, voice and language that are comparable with Miss Potter's.

#### ***§5.3.1. Future research perspectives: ethnographic monitoring as cycle***

In the ideal case I would go back to Miss Potter's class to refine the narrative pedagogy, which is likely to result in an increase of usefulness. Subsequently Miss Potter would

then be able to apply this pedagogy in her transition class and I would then, as the long-term academic consultant Hymes (1981b) had in mind monitor the effects and usefulness of the pedagogy according to the four steps of ethnographic monitoring. Then ethnographic monitoring is no longer a linear process, but it becomes a cycle, which implies that the role of the stakeholders in the field is beyond fact-checking research results. The circles of epistemological activity, as I have described in this thesis, would then be repeated over and over again.

In §3.4 I discussed the children's superdiverse repertoires and the four learning modes that have been distinguished by Blommaert and Backus (2011): embedded language learning, encounters with language, specialized language learning, and comprehensive language learning. I stated that these learning modes are highly connected to where, how and how often the resource is used and that differences in learning modes imply a different position of a resource in one's repertoire. The connection between the learning modes, the way the resource is used and the position of a resource in a repertoire is another topic that could benefit from further empirical research. A transition class would be a highly relevant and interesting case for ethnographic empirical examination of the relation between learning modes and repertoire.

In this thesis I have considered superdiversity as a phenomenon, a characteristic of the transition class. In §2.2 I argued that another understanding of this concept, namely superdiversity as paradigm that challenges our assumptions, is also possible. I do think that understanding superdiversity as paradigm could have contributed to an accurate analysis, presumably even an analysis more accurate than I have provided by understanding superdiversity as phenomenon. To give but one example: in this thesis I have repeatedly spoken about 'the Dutch language'. However, due to superdiversity it is acknowledged that "the idea that there are distinct languages, and that a proper language is bounded, pure and composed of structured sounds, grammar and vocabulary designed for referring to things" (Blommaert & Rampton 2011: 5) is denaturalized. According to Blommaert and Backus (2011), "no psychological reality is claimed for the notion of a language: 'language' is just a convenient way to refer to the cumulative inventory of resources shared by most people in a 'community'" (p. 8). The idea of language as bounded entity is only one of out of numerous understandings that have been challenged as a consequence of a diversification of diversity.

Another part of this imagined next research project, which unfortunately lies outside of the scope of this master thesis, would be to explore the opportunities of sharing time for the oral preparation for literacy (Michaels 1981), which I have discussed in §1.1.3 as part of the academic pedigree of research on narrative and, more specifically, on sharing time in education. This is a topic that I have not been able to address in the fieldwork I carried out in Miss Potter's class, but wthat certainly deserves thorough ethnographic exploration.



**§5.3.2. “En en en alle jongens en meisjes gaan naar, naar mij eh lachen”: delicate voices**

*(And and and all boys and girls will, will eh laugh at me)*

Throughout this thesis it repeatedly appeared that Miss Potter was concerned with the children’s opportunities to produce a narrative in order to ‘get off their minds whatever they want’ and to accomplish voice. I found her aiming at utilizing at least two of the three potential functions of sharing time: enabling the children to make a connection between their school life and their out-of-school life, and providing the pupils an opportunity to achieve voice. In Miss Potter’s transition class superdiversity quickly turned into inequality, inequality that Miss Potter was seeking to negotiate and level out, but that she could not remove. She aimed at doing so by using a series of procedures, which ranged from allowing the usage of other resources than Dutch, via using pantomime, to the construction of a particular genre – and which I rearticulated into a tentative narrative pedagogy. However, superdiversity and inequality in this transition class are by no means temporary phenomena: these issues continuously determined the reality in this class as a lens we cannot avoid looking through even if we would want to. As a result, the process to the actual potential achievement of voice remains a delicate one: a process that is paved with obstacles, but that sometimes also suddenly turns into satisfaction and joy when, for instance “all boys and girls will laugh” (see Anah’s story, §4.3.1.). In this thesis, by using a combination of ethnographic monitoring and ethnopoetics, I have aimed at providing perspectives that can serve as handles for the achievement of exactly this satisfactory communication, that is, for the accomplishment of voice.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1. Transcription Conventions (based on Van der Aa 2012).*

=	for latched utterances
((word))	for comments: indicating laughter; stance; other actions; and explanations
?	for questions
!	for exclamations
.	for the end of a sentence
,	for separating parts of a sentence such as clauses
WORD	for speech that is louder than the surrounding speech or for the beginning of a sentence
(.)	for pauses less than one second
(1.5)	pauses in seconds, up to 0.5 seconds precise
xxx	for unclear fragments
[	for the beginning of overlapping speech
]	for the end of overlapping speech
w:o::rd	for prolonged vowels
*word	for mistakes that would remain unclear without asterisk

### *Ethnopoetic transcription conventions:*

Lines	numbered as 01; 02; 03
Groups of lines	indented
Verses	indicated as a; b; c behind lines
Stanzas	indicated as I, II, III, IV, V behind lines

Especially with telling I think that they also just, how do you say that, must be able to get off their minds whatever they want and if I anticipate too much on syntax or grammar that then on a given moment they are like, yes, that they don't want to tell anymore because then they have the feeling or are afraid of doing it wrong, let's say. But I think that with telling they just must be able to do that. Like this Melissa who makes a lot of mistakes in telling, yes, I do find it good that she keeps telling and therefore I try to kind of unconsciously then, through my answer which I give, correct her then. But then not like in front of the whole group, for instance saying like "No, you have to say this or..." With telling I don't do that, if we are for instance making sentences for an exercise, then I do it, but not during telling.

## Appendix 3. Translation Example 2: Meeting teachers transition classes, January 2012

01. Miss Brown: Who has agreed if you are allowed to speak your own language  
02. who has that...  
03. Miss Tall: O yes that point that's also quite important  
04. Miss Young: Th-that was [like that when we came here and you explained that to me]  
05. Miss Potter: [That was already there when we came and yes xxx]  
06. Miss Young: [and I have  
07. Miss Potter: Yes [and I also adopted that]  
08. Miss Brown: Who [said that?]  
09. Miss Young: [Yes let's certainly discuss those kind of things]  
10. Miss Potter: I think Suzanne, Ilse and Ria, who worked [here at that time]  
11. Miss Brown: [Ah, [not on  
12. management level ((laughs relieved))]]  
13. Miss Young: [But  
14. we have foreseeing insights right?]  
15. Miss Potter: Well, Henk ((former principle)) also, Henk also once said that to me  
16. [that that was the rule]  
17. Miss Grey: [We also every now and then turned a blind eye to it, not when children  
18. use it to be un=  
19. Miss Brown: =unkind  
20. Miss Grey: You know, when you're occupied with your lessons, you know, than not.  
21. You know it's actually, actually it's self-evident isn't it. But we have mainly  
22. when we were at one of those workshops that one woman also said that,  
23. you know, she argued that children really should be allowed to speak  
24. their ehh own language, that they can express themselves then. Yes, of  
25. course also with a reason right, that you allow it every now and then.

*An extensive discussion about situations wherein allowing other languages than Dutch is either convenient or inconvenient follows. The teachers mention that speaking another language than Dutch is allowed during eating fruit or at the playground – these moments are ‘free moments’ for the pupils. Furthermore it is allowed when a child feels sad; when pupils can translate for each other or explain something to another child– a clear example of a situation wherein speaking other languages than Dutch doesn’t disturb the lessons but rather supports it. Here the point of view ‘not during lessons’ is nuanced by the teachers: they acknowledge that other languages than Dutch can also support the lessons, and in that case it is allowed and seen as useful. The teachers also mention the usefulness of other languages than Dutch for the children to enable them to reminisce about their past with each other, something the teachers find important. Situations wherein they find that it is not convenient that another language than Dutch is spoken are: when other pupils have the feeling that they are excluded; when the home language is used for cursing or swearing; and when it disturbs the lessons. The teachers agree with each other that*

*allowing other languages than Dutch can be very convenient and important for the children as it allows them to “express themselves”. They hold the view that pupils themselves feel very well when it is allowed to speak another language than Dutch and when it is not allowed.*

27. Miss Young: Well, shall we then just
28. Miss Tall: Yes
29. Miss Grey: But you know like [well]
30. Miss Young: [just] leave it to, to the situation and
31. the teacher.
32. Miss Brown: Yes
33. Miss Young: I mean because we are all capable enough to assess by ourselves
34. [when it's alright]
35. Miss Brown: [Exactly]
36. Miss Young: And then, then there is no longer a real ban
37. Miss Brown: ((reads aloud while composing the minutes)) Teacher decides
38. when an own language is being spoken
39. Miss Brown: Mother tongue, not an own language. Alright.
40. Miss Brown: ((reads aloud while composing the minutes)) Not only negative
41. Miss Young: No, because it's, yes, like you are explaining it, that is actually true
42. Miss Potter: Hm-m. Yes.
43. Miss Brown: Yes, that's what the lady at the LOWAN said.
44. Miss Potter: Yes.
45. Miss Young: Alright but therefore it's also [good to discuss with each
46. other]
47. Miss Grey: [For us it was also like o yes]
48. you know, yes, you see ((relieved)), now it's
49. Miss Brown: Yes
50. Miss Grey: legitimate, you know, you already did it, but then you also hear it
51. from someone who
52. Miss Young: [Yes]
53. Miss Potter: [Yes]
54. Miss Grey: whose opinion has more weight or value
55. Miss Brown: Yes
56. Miss Grey: than ours, in the field of education
57. Miss Brown: Okay.



*Appendix 4. Translation Example 3: Interview with Miss Mary, acting principal, February 2012.*

01. Kristel: And ehh, the dealing with the, with the, with the different ehh  
02. mother tongues that the children bring along, to what extent is  
03. there in the policy of the school ehh space to speak them in the  
04. Class, or is the rule that it is only Dutch?
05. Miss Mary: In principle only Dutch is spoken. And yes, and sometimes it occurs  
06. that ehh, especially when a child is only, only just at  
07. school and does not yet speak a single word of Dutch and you  
08. have a ehh pupil who speaks the same language that you as  
09. teacher can say like 'well, just tell how things happen here' in the  
10. particular language but in principle we speak Dutch here in school.
11. Kristel: Okay and what is the idea behind that?
12. Miss Mary: Because these children live in the Netherlands, they have a  
13. residence permit, and try to learn Dutch as soon as possible.
14. Kristel: Yes.
15. Miss Mary: In all places they are here.
16. Kristel: Yes. And do you have the idea that in, in practice, there is a certain  
17. flexibility to that rule or that ehh, that teachers follow it  
18. rigorously?
19. Miss Mary: Yes, I mean, sometimes if you want to make clear something to a child  
20. and he totally does not understand you, and he does understand 'a'  
21. German, or he does understand 'an' English, then you will go back to  
22. that occasionally and I mean, we don't give you a hard time about th- that.
23. Kristel: No. But then it's more, say, like a remedy.
24. Miss Mary: Like a remedy.
25. Kristel: Yes.
26. Miss Mary: But the spoken language, in principle simply Dutch is  
27. spoken.
28. Kristel: Yes. Okay.

I really see telling as in that you want to get something off your mind. It is not I ask – yes, well, that is actually also possible, I ask a question and a child tells something about that, but that it is something the child comes up with by itself, thinks about itself, let's say. And then makes something like a little story out of it in own words. Yes, so that can be as a result of a question I asked or something that happened. Yes, I actually think that a lot of what happens here in the class is actually telling, because during the *Woordenschat* there also occurs a lot of telling, and about the weekend for instance and yes, I do think that it has a very central place in the class, the telling, I think that a lot of things are telling.

Immediately after the holiday I first asked them to make a drawing with 'What did you like?' and 'What did you like less?'. Some also find it very difficult to then at once like 'Okay, what did you do?'. And then they have to start thinking and that then they can think up at beforehand 'Well, this'. In that way they also can think about like 'How can I tell that?' while they are drawing and then they also have a hold to that drawing, that for instance when they show it, that everybody already sees like 'O fireworks' or something like that. That they can refer to that and that the other children also know a bit like 'Well, that's what the story is about'. So I often do that when really I do sharing time. I also often let the children ask questions. That they are allowed to think about questions themselves and ask them to one another and indeed yes, asking questions, but sometimes I also give options myself. So children who are not yet here for a long time and who just can't talk that much yet and they can understand things already, ehh yes, that I mention a few things like 'Did you do this? Did you do that?' Also like simple things like 'Did you eat?' like 'Yes.' 'Then what?' and sometimes they can say that. Or that I try in that way to select the easier things that they maybe already can say, or, or only can say 'Yes' or 'No'. I also once did like a book with all kinds of pictures, ehh, that for instance a big page with all kinds of sports on it and that they then, that you ask 'Well, who finds what a nice sport?' 'When did you do that?' 'With whom did you do that?' and that like that they can also point to things, then they don't have to say everything, but also can tell it with, say, pictures. Ehh and... Yes I think those are the most important things.

01. Miss Potter: The grammar is often, yes, still quite hard, also because here they  
 02. are not really taught grammar, except for spelling of verbs and yes  
 03. of course also, yes, of course a lot of things are  
 04. grammar, like also large, larger, largest and those kind of  
 05. exercises we do, and but and to, to make sentences with there is not  
 06. that. But yet really a fixed method, for  
 07. spelling.  
 08. Kristel: For grammar [you mean]?  
 09. Miss Potter: [For grammar yes]. And neither for spelling  
 10. by the way, and for grammar. And therefore it also, that is  
 11. also the disadvantage of this teaching material, why we are  
 switching to  
 12. that other one, it is very much up to your own insights, what do you  
 provide and what  
 13. do you think they cannot do yet and do you, there is no fixed  
 learning path like  
 14. today you are going to do this or and eventually  
 15. they should have learned that, that, yes, that we just don't have yet,  
 16. so therefore that is also, yes, a bit, yes, say, poorly organized.  
 17. Kristel: In the area of grammar?  
 18. Miss Potter: Yes.  
 19. Kristel: Why was there ever chosen in favor of this method?  
 20. Miss Potter: There are almost no methods for teaching Dutch as a second  
 21. language anyway because that's just ehh, yes, there are not many  
 22. classes and apparently it doesn't yield enough to develop a method  
 23. for that, let's say. And this method is developed by the woman who  
 24. taught here, in transition class 2 it was at that time and  
 25. another woman, they made it by themselves and, so, that is already a  
 26. few years ago.

*Miss Potter goes on to explain that they will start with a new method in a few months. Miss Brown and Miss Grey are familiar with this method since they had used it in the asylum seekers' center. None of the teachers is happy with the new method, but there appears to be nothing else, and especially Miss Young and Miss Potter feel like they need more 'grip', more clarity. The method they were using at the time of the fieldwork was very old-fashioned. The method they would start using shortly after the fieldwork is the only available method. Therefore they are going to start using it although they are not enthusiastic. The new method offers more and clearer grammar, including a learning path.*

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<sup>4</sup> I have tried to obtain as much similarity as possible between the Dutch examples and the translations. Therefore some numbered lines are spread over two lines in the translated examples.

*Appendix 8. Translation Example 7: Miss Potter reads aloud Isabella's ascribed qualities, January 2012.*

01. Miss Potter: ((reads aloud)) Talking. Talking English. Drawing. Playing learning
02. counting. Singing. Playing well. Beautiful girl. Writing.
03. Helping children.
04. Miss Potter: Then we've got them.

*Appendix 9. Translation Example 8: Lucine's Story, January 2012.*

01. Miss Potter: Ehh Lucine, what did you do?
02. Lucine: Ehh... I went shops with my brother, center. O no
03. Miss. My brother have match football. Then I went there with my
04. Mother and watched. Yes and ehh then there watched.
05. Miss Potter: Okay. A question for Lucine. Anah.
06. Anah: Has your brother wond?
07. Danijela: ((laughs)) Won.
08. Miss Potter: Yes, good question.
09. Lucine: Yes.
10. Miss Potter: And where does Zareh play football?
11. Lucine: Ehh.... Miss I forget the city name. Is hard now. I don't
12. know.
13. Miss Potter: Was it not in Havenaar?
14. Lucine: Hmm... Oh yes it was.
15. Miss Potter: O, it was. Alright. Melissa?
16. Melissa: How many did your brother win?
17. Lucine: Ehh... 4-2.
18. Anah: Wow!
19. Lucine: ((proud)) Hm-m.
20. Miss Potter: There are a couple of children who think along with questions very
21. well, well done.

*Appendix 10. Translation Example 9: Miming for Hassad, January 2012.*

01. Miss Potter: Ehh, Hasad. What did you do?
02. Hasad: ((shakes his head))
03. Danijela: ((laughs))
04. Miss Potter: During the weekend? Were you at the computer? ((mimes
05. typing))? Or did you read ((mimes turning pages))? Or
06. watch television ((draws monitor in the air))?
07. Hasad: No.
08. Miss Potter: Is maybe still hard now.

*Appendix 11. Translation Example 10: Asking for an interpreter, January 2012.*

- 01. Amira: ((whispers)) I don't know.
- 02. Miss Potter: Yes, but Amira, just say it in Somali, maybe
- 03. Nasra knows it.
- 04. Amira: I don't know.
- 05. Miss Potter: Too bad.



*Appendix 12: Translation Example 11: Miss Potter on the transition class's best storytellers, January 2012.*

They are both like, 'Well, I want to get something off my mind and I will look for every opportunity to te- yes get rid of it', let's say. And because they speak a lot and want to tell a lot they also just learn faster because they – yes I don't know, that just goes faster when you do it more often. And, well, I always understand them when they want to tell something.

*Appendix 13. Translation Example 16: Ethnopoetic transcription of Danijela's story, January 2012.*

- Miss Potter: here you see SWIMMING ((points to blackboard))  
 SWIMMING is also e=s= a sport  
 some children learn SWIMMING in school
- Anah: yes I did  
 Miss Potter: yes, did you SwiM in the other school?  
 Anah: yes in ehh the other s= [in the other school]  
 Miss Potter: [in the other school]  
 okay  
 who already has a Certificate for SWIMMING?  
 who can already SWIM well?
01. Melissa: ((raises hand))  
 Danijela: **yes** I have **almost** [xxx] ⇐ a  
 Miss Potter: [Melissa]  
 Melissa: but I almost  
 but I can xxx in that (.)  
 that I can ehh (0.5) swim well  
 and xxx
- Miss Potter: but you did go swimming last weekend  
 Melissa: yes I swim  
 but not ehh ehh (1.0)  
 Miss Potter: can you still stand then?  
 Melissa: yes  
 Miss Potter: yes  
 not in deep water
- Miss Potter: yes  
 Melissa: yes  
 Miss Potter: okay  
 and Danijela?
02. Danijela: **yes** I was **almost** ⇐  
 03. in Macedonia ⇐ b  
 04. I had to ehh (.) a few [more days] ⇐  
 Miss Potter: [ehh Isabella, Bartek has  
 to do it on his own for a minute]
05. Danijela: I had to few more days  
 06. **and** This (.)  
 07. **yes** I really swim ehh (.) well  
 08. **but I have to few more days** (.) see This ⇐  
 09. ehh (.) instructor  
 10. **but I come to the Netherlands** (.) ⇐ c  
 Miss Potter: o so you JUST did not = finish it  
 11. Danijela: = yes  
 Miss Potter: okay

01. Miss Potter: In a minute you can tell something about the weekend. And you  
are going to select one  
02. thing. What is the most fun. So not I ate, I went  
03. sleeping, I was at the computer, I went playing outside,  
04. I went this, bla-bla-bla, and that's it. No, you are going to tell one  
05. thing which was the most fun of your weekend. One, so you  
06. have to choose. And you are going to tell something about that.  
For instance when  
07. the most fun is that you were at the computer than you are going  
to tell  
08. for instance which game, with whom, when, then that is what  
09. you are going to tell something about. When you have a question  
you put your finger forward  
10. ((demonstrates)). That is a question. A finger in the air  
11. means that you want to tell ((demonstrates)). When someone is  
12. telling – you are not listening Said – then you put your finger  
13. down, because then it can't be anyone's turn.

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<sup>5</sup> I have tried to obtain as much similarity as possible between the Dutch examples and the translations. Therefore some numbered lines are spread over two lines in the translated examples.

Appendix 15. Translation Example 18: Ethnopoetic transcription of Anah's story, January 2012.

- Miss Potter: okay  
you wanted to tell something Anah
- Anah: yes
- Miss Potter: yes  
what did you do
01. Anah: I went yesterday (.) horse riding (.) ehh with that cousin **I** a  
Miss Potter: SO  
exciting!
02. Anah: yes I was at first very afraid ⇐ b  
Miss Potter: yes
03. Anah: **and** I I I I I was very \*afraid ⇐  
04. **and afterward** (.)  
05. **then** just like that I will fall ⇐  
06. **and and and** all boys and girls will  
07. ehh laugh at me
- Miss Potter: O ((surprised))
08. Anah: yes (.) it is this b:i::g horse((demonstration))  
Miss Potter: [yes]  
Class: [[[laughter]]]
09. Anah: **and then** just like that you will (.)  
10. you will fall ⇐
- Miss Potter: was that the first time [that you] were on a horse?  
11. Anah: [yes] c  
12. with my cousin  
13. but my cousin is on  
14. ehh horse riding **or so**
- Miss Potter: [okay]
15. Anah: [yes]  
Miss Potter: nice
16. Anah: yes
17. **[and** I had] ⇐ **II** a  
Miss Potter: [and I'm seeing a few questions] for you  
or did you want to tell something more about it?
18. Anah: yes
19. **and then** ehh (.) I went ehh back ehh home ⇐  
20. **then** I saw ehh (.) one movie (.) 3D ⇐
- Miss Potter: ((whispers)) one thing  
About the horse riding

*Appendix 16. Translation Example 19: Miss Potter's reaction on the ethnopoetic analysis of Anah's story, April 2012<sup>6</sup>.*

01. Kristel: I wrote it down on a paper, that I don't have to continuously
02. s=
03. Miss Potter: =Funny, you are not at all consciously doing that when you just
04. = when you tell it like this you think 'Yes', but =
05. Kristel: = But do you recognize it?
06. Miss Potter: Yes, for sure, but when just someone is telling something I am
07. of course not occupied with that in my head, like, what exactly
08. is the effect of what I'm saying but when you see it like this then,
09. yes! No,
10. I do recognize it, but, yes, I think it's funny, I never think about
11. it in this way
12. Kristel: No.
13. Miss Potter: It goes more, yes, automatically.
14. Kristel: Yes.
15. Miss Potter: Nice!

*Miss Potter tells about Anah's progress: it had been 2, 5 months since Anah's story was recorded and hearing the recording made her notice that Anah's command of Dutch had increased. Later on in the meeting, Miss Potter again took the lead in returning to the ethnopoetic analysis once more.*

15. Miss Potter: Yes, I do find it very funny to see that you are not
16. really consciously doing that during sharing time, let's say
17. but (.)
18. Kristel: No and=
19. Miss Potter: =When you see it on a paper like this, you think like 'Yes!.

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<sup>6</sup> I have tried to obtain as much similarity as possible between the Dutch examples and the translations. Therefore some numbered lines are spread over two lines in the translated examples.